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ABSTRACT

This book presents games for children, teenagers, and adults, explaining how each game can help children develop in a holistic way. It begins by discussing tips for teaching games, how to deal with children who break the rules, and what type of equipment to use. The book provides help on how to approach play within each of the different age groups. The early years focus on singing, imitation, and finger games, followed by string games, chasing, cooperative throwing, and skipping games. Activities that encourage grace of movement, fairness, and equality are presented for children ages 7-10 years, leading to games for courage, accuracy, and gentle preparation for sport at ages 11 and 12 years. Games that encourage the renewal of traditional playgroup culture along with swimming games are described. The book explores spatial development in the form of sport, gymnastics, and outdoor activities for teenagers. It also explores children's problems with play and sport and presents practical solutions, noting the benefits of martial arts. (SM)

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Games Children Play

How games and sport help children develop

M. Large

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Games Children Play

How games and sport help children develop

Kim Brooking-Payne

Illustrations by Marije Rowling

Compiled by Kate Hammond

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated with love to Alison, whose tolerance, patience and support allowed it, and all that stands behind it, to become a reality.

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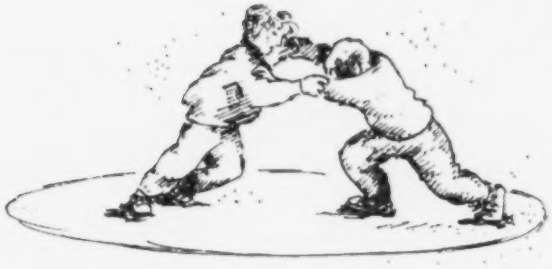

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Foreword

The Deeper Significance of Games

How playing healthy games helps children develop in the senses of movement and balance in the electronic age.

Cheryl L. Sanders

From playing to watching

Until a few decades ago children's play was their work. Playing was created by children when they were not otherwise engaged in helping or learning. During the latter half of this century a startling phenomenon has occurred, mostly precipitated by the advent of television. Beginning in the early to mid 1960's children gradually began to play less and less – and watch (TV) more. *This gesture of watching will prove most revealing.*

Not just in the West, but areas of the planet that began to be called 'developed' became subject to the loss of children being able to play spontaneously. What has been lost? And why have we not noticed this transformation with alarm? We do not seem to notice the loss until children become adolescents, then our attention is riveted because of the problems that seem to appear 'out of nowhere'. Suddenly our precocious 'little adults' become unreasonable 'big children'.

Perhaps our lack of attention to what happens with and around children today, and for the last three to four decades, is because we, too, have just been watching. The problem when we watch television, even 'good' television (as in program content) is that we only watch. We do not do. There is little to no movement, not even of the eyes that are watching. We seemed to have missed the early indications, even as we were becoming enamored of and/or dismayed by the culture that resulted. At the outset TV influenced culture and moved it from evolving through the arts and humanities, to mimicking what was advertised. As our attention becomes more and more diverted toward what to buy and how to look, we no longer see where it is that we are paying most dearly for what we have received so cheaply.

So where do we 'pay'? In the realm of education, we have discovered something called 'learning disabilities'. To be more appropriate, this should be called teaching dis-ability, for no child cannot or will not learn. Only our lack of consciousness as to who is before us and what is asked limits any child's ability to learn, or to learn what we wish to impart.

The label 'dyslexia' became a diagnosis in the 1960's, and we can follow an increase in its occurrence through the 70's and 80's. In the 80's hyperactivity, and now ADD (attention deficit disorder) and ADHD (attention deficit/hyperactive disorder) are epidemic in the schools. Proportionally there has been an increase in drug abuse, perhaps in direct relation to the increase of what we euphemistically call 'medicating' any child who does not sit still at school enough to be properly 'taught', with such drugs as ritalin. (This medicine can be extremely helpful for 1 to 2% of cases, but enormously destructive to the 80 to 90% who receive it for behavior modification.) Also crime and violence among adolescents and young people have increased. In addition, the numbers of people who are depressed, anxious, fearful, even suicidal are startling, and these are not just adult symptoms. Children are also characterized by these diagnoses, in a time when childhood is revered and supposedly sacred. Why? It is also worth noting again that the same phenomenon can be documented with each third world country introduced to the marvels of technology, most especially television. (e.g., Jerry Mander's *In the Absence of the Sacred,* Sierra Club Books, 1991)

The question certainly arises, 'What do we do?' We cannot go back to the time before television. What has been lost cannot be found by pretending, or acting like TV does not exist. This is not a game.

The transformation of this powerful presence is only possible by facing it consciously, neither allowing ourselves to remain in the communal trance into which we have plunged, nor reacting out of a fundamentalist position. We need to be fully present to the world as it is the nature of the child to be fully present. But what is the contemporary world the child enters now, and why does so much that once we learned spontaneously have to be developed consciously, even taught? Carefully and consciously knowing what needs to be taught can only manifest in the school curriculum by learning from each generation of children what they have *not* brought with them. Children can teach us what they need to be taught if we can truly observe in them those places that are waiting for guidance.

In this time, those places can be met most fully through books like *Games Children Play.* For what we see now is that children need to be taught the relation of their bodies to the world, and most especially, to others. For example, in a world where 'watching' is not necessarily seeing, vision must be taught, or at the very least nurtured to the true capacity of seeing what is perceived as a creative activity between the seer and the seen. This is not given by the simulated world of television or computer screen images.

What has this fundamental gesture of 'watching' given us? If it is transformed into a spiritual capacity, then we begin to actually see what we are watching. What does one see when we watch that which we love most deeply, namely our children?

In 1906 Rudolf Steiner introduced the nature of the human being's sensory organization in a whole new light. He outlined twelve senses, and briefly described and referred to these twelve senses in only a few lectures.* To see the needs of children today, we must be able to watch them with living vision, and learn from them what they need to be taught first, in this most basic realm of the body. What we see if we look closely is not only what they are most in need of, but also where we ourselves are in need of healing. In the first four senses Steiner spoke of, the most fundamental rudiments of being a human being are given at birth to every healthy infant. These are born with us in all the senses, but we will focus on the most primary, lower, or corporeal senses. Normal development demonstrates the unfolding of these senses of touch, movement, balance and what Steiner referred to as the life sense. (The senses of vision, taste, warmth and smell are the middle, or world senses, and hearing, thought, speech and individuality are called the higher, or communal senses.).** A grasp of the senses of movement and balance is vital for understanding the importance of *Games Children Play.*

It is assumed when we see an infant move that it knows how to move, and that movement is healthy. Then, in a year or so, the baby stands on wobbly little legs, and eventually takes off into the world walking. It appears he or she has found the sense of balance. But we have come to a time when these two elements of our being in the world can no longer be assumed to be mere normal functions of the body. We must now begin to understand movement and balance as actual sense activities. As such they are subject to disruption and distortion, and can only be taught to function in healthy ways if we realize the need to do so. It follows that *Games Children Play,* and other books like it, are not just nice compendiums of games and 'age appropriate' things to do with children. They now contain some of the most crucial elements in education. We are being called to wake up and become conscious of who we are, what we are doing and how we are relating to each other. The disruption of the senses, especially the lower senses, is so primary that we cannot see it in others, even children, because we do not see it in ourselves. To teach something, one must first know it personally.

What do we know about movement and balance as *senses?*

The Sense of Movement

The sense of movement senses whether we are still or in movement. We feel the movements of our body primarily by means of the muscle system. This system senses not only the larger movements of our body, such as that of our arms and legs, of the feeling in our neck when we move our head, but also much more subtle movements, such as the movement of the eyes, the movement of the fingers and toes, the movement of our chest and belly when we breathe in and out. When the sense of movement functions in a healthy way, we experience a bodily sense of having a reason for being here; we have a sense of purpose. In the present world, the sense of movement is either too cramped or it becomes too muscle-bound. Sitting all day at work or school, or even in day care, and then being carried everywhere by car, bus, or subway, the inner sense of movement dims and we feel more like we are lugging our body around. On the other hand, the ways in which we try to balance the feeling of being cramped – through going to the gym to work out on exercise machines, or playing games such as organized sports or jogging, (or for children the release of running around frantically or banging, breaking or smashing things); these activities do not result in a healthy sense of movement either. We may feel the tingling of muscles, and get a temporary high from the increase in blood circulation, but it is more like a momentary breaking through the barrier of confinement than moving in purposeful and meaningful freedom. Observe your own body after watching TV for even just thirty minutes. It feels a little sluggish, heavy. Then look at children who are watching TV, and follow the manner in which they move for the first few minutes after. They either move manically, as if out of control, or they will appear to be 'warming up' to being in a body at all, and seem to take a while to 'get going'.

For the new born baby, movement has been happening since before birth. An infant moves in direct relation to the sounds in its environment, most especially the sound of the mother's voice.

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* Rudolf Steiner, *Anthroposophy, A Fragment,* Anthroposophic Press, Hudson, NY, 1996;
and Rudolf Steiner, *Study of Man,* Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1966.

** for a full exploration of the senses, see A. Soesman, *The Twelve Senses,* Hawthorn Press, Stroud, U.K., 1985.

Each of those movements that seem so erratic and non directed by the infant is the body responding to, answering, dancing with the sounds (and to a lesser degree sights) by which it is surrounded. The choreography of the first movements of the body are evidence of the deepest learning that takes place from the moment of birth.

As we once were steeped in a world of the voices of the family and the natural sounds of wind and storm, the world's voices of animals and water, we are now adrift in an increasingly simulated world of sounds of all kinds coming from the pervasive electronic media. This is not to say that any of these sounds is intrinsically bad, just that they are different. What does the difference mean? For the infant, movement is directed from a different realm, and becomes a different kind of activity. Well, babies still move the way they always have, in that adorable, chaotic way that charms the soul of adults. But children are having more and more difficulty with movement at younger ages than ever before. If we see movement as learned at a deep level through the environment, we can begin to understand it as the subtle language of the soul, and distinctly different in different cultures. Movement teaches us to speak through imitation of the movement of the larynx, as well as the imitation of heard sounds. It guides the nature of our thinking, it illustrates our temperament and what we think of the world. We are more and more disconnected from the sense of movement as a sense because we move less naturally or spontaneously than we once did. For example, movement is given back to us in the things we manufacture and surround ourselves with in the world. When we were surrounded only by simple, hand made tools, our movement was natural and flowed freely from within us as we created the world around us and dwelt in its heart. However, with the industrial revolution and the overwhelmingly rapid invention of untold numbers of machines, things changed. As we began to work with and around machines in factories, on farms and wherever we live, work or play, at every level of society, our movements began to change. We take on the movement of the mechanical, and the model of what we work with and around; machines are in factories, on farms and in our homes, schools and businesses, so at every level of society, our movements have changed. Having taken on the movements of the mechanical, the model of what we work with or are surrounded by, becomes our model for the body, instead of vice versa. For example, watch people in large cities walk down the street. They walk as if they were cars maneuvering through traffic. There is a distinct characteristic to the movements we take on as a result of inventing and then emulating the machine.

Now, in childhood there is the simple yet profound reverence for the adult that is manifested by the deepest imitation. This imitation is not the simple mimicking of outer activity, but imitation on the most profound level, one could even say on a cellular level. The imitation reaches to the spiritual gesture behind movement. If the adult moves in quick, jerky, rapid or disconcerting ways – the child will take this into the deepest realm of their own being, and move in the same way. The child does not have to personally meet the specific machinery or electronic device the adult has absorbed into their soul, and manifested in their actions. In education we never consider the question, 'How has this child learned to move in the world?'

Movement is not just the movement of my voluntary muscles in response to my wishes. It is also a response to the world. If I wish to open the door, the door is as involved in my movement toward it, and it draws me to fulfil the goal of opening the door, as my wish to open the door is in me. Thus my opening the door, just as any other grand or simple movement we make, is imbued with purpose, and the origin of our sense of purpose.

As we have seen, movement is the origin of our sense of purpose. The disruption of the sense of movement wholly disrupts our capacity to live in the world with a sense of purpose. This is perhaps the single most destructive outcome of the disruption of this sense, for living without a sense of purpose sets us up for depression, despair, and a loss of the inner relation to our own activity as essential to the world.

Hyperactivity was invented as a diagnosis at about the same time we technologically 'broke the sound barrier'. It has become a distinct presence in schools as a diagnosed learning disability. It will probably become more prevalent as we take up computer technology and attempt to emulate the movement of the computer, whizzing along in cyberspace. Movement gives us a sense of freedom, and a sense of direction. If our movement is dictated by an unconscious imitation, and no consciousness is brought to this sense, that sense of freedom becomes a prison of frenzied activity out of control and bouncing off of and into everything outside of the self. This makes a mockery of freedom, and it becomes impossible to conceive of what true freedom is for the individual, as well as precluding ever coming to that inner sense of knowing my purpose, my destiny. This is of significance in our time because of the increasing numbers of people who seek a sense of this for themselves, and fall into despair because they cannot find such a sense.

In a child the extremes of disruption of the sense of movement may be hyperactivity, but it can also manifest as a sort of inertia. Inertia is often labelled low self esteem, when in fact the self is debilitated by the sense of movement being assaulted by either over stimulation or relentless alteration.

We can only approach the healing of movement for children through interaction in and with the

natural world. Although movement as a sense must be approached for adults through community and interaction with others, for children, the games and activities in this book will help bring healing to the imitation of movement as mechanical, or electrical. Through teaching children to play, one strengthens the capacity of the body to bear the demands of a world in which our own learned movement is as simulated, or artificial, as the movement we see.

It is also interesting to note the work of Dr. Harold Levinson, in New York City, who treats hyperactivity and certain forms of dyslexia with over-the-counter motion sickness medication, with remarkable results.*** His work is mostly scorned by the LD (learning disabilities) and medical communities. Is it too simple and straightforward? Or just too threatening to find the true source of the problems that fuel large markets? If one is always overwhelmed by movement, or a little off-balance, would one not feel the dizziness of 'motion sickness'?

The Sense of Balance

The sense of balance, centered in the inner ear, senses the relationship between the earth's gravity and our own body. When the sense of balance functions in a healthy way we are not only able to stand upright and move around in the world without it swaying because we have lost our point of reference, there is also a more subtle feeling; we feel inner calm and security. With the sense of balance we are able to take our place in the world as human beings between the sky above and the earth below. We will remain uniquely our self in the midst of all the other selves. The inner calm and security is a corporeal feeling of ourselves as spiritual beings of the earth.

In the present world there is much that throws us off balance. The extreme instance, when, for example, there is an inner ear infection, is vertigo. But much more subtle states of imbalance occur. Then a kind of vertigo occurs, but it feels more like a vague sense of being swallowed up by the surrounding world. If one does not have the sense of being a spiritual being, which is a very corporeal feeling, not some kind of out-of-body experience, it is like feeling the ground is at any moment going to give way. In the modern world, we often feel that we move from one thing to another throughout the day – answering phones, going to meetings, solving one crisis after the other, trying to meet all the demands that come toward us in a kind of frenzy. After a few hours of this we can feel dizzy or even disoriented. If you are in this kind of situation, and take a short break by walking outside, there is an unmistakable feeling of a return of calm and inner security. The sense of balance, of equilibrium, has a little chance to recover. But imagine what it is like when there is not this respite. Life is lived out of balance.

The interesting thing about balance is that it is directly related to the sense of our Self in relation to the world. The world is what makes it possible to maintain balance. It does not give us balance; it makes it possible for us to stay in balance. We each at some point quite early in our career as human beings, stand upright. Unless there is some physical infirmity, we each balance ourselves on our own two feet. No child ever has been known to say, 'Oh, I'll wait awhile for standing, maybe when I'm 5 or 6, I'll be stronger then.' Every child stands before he speaks. Every child learns balance as the first major accomplishment only he can bring about for himself. This milestone in life gives the body the means by which one can eventually speak the word 'I'. 'I' learn of my self only when standing. What do we do to infants who, when raised to their feet only weeks after birth and, because their muscles automatically flex when placed in this precarious position, we smile in our ignorance and say, 'Look, he's trying to stand all ready!' Or, 'Oh, he loves it when I stand him up', without realizing he is not 'trying to stand', but that his immature muscles are being put under enormous strain and imposition, and possibly damaging what only later should be strengthened out of the child's own forces? Those forces are debilitated by *our* game of holding babies in this premature position. When a baby is allowed to pull himself up when he is ready, and, in spite of all the falls and bumps, brings himself to the moment of standing upright, then the body is strengthened for the moment of speaking of one's self as a free, independent individual. This simple misunderstanding makes it possible to disrupt the sense of balance even before the age of three. Any early disruption in the sense of balance profoundly affects the will forces that are developing and informing the child of his own tasks and responsibilities in and to the world. The accomplishment of free, individual balance is the foundation for communion with the world, others and the divine.

But what if one were always a tiny bit disoriented in the sense of balance? And how would this disruption manifest in the behavior of a young child? Being slightly off balance may not cause too much of a problem in the earliest years. We have an enormous capacity to compensate to the extent that no one, not even our mother, can detect that any compensating is occurring. And we, of course, do not know that is what we are doing. It does, however manifest its repercussions a bit later, when one is attempting to coordinate the body in space to finer gestures, such as the eyes moving across a

*** For futher study on the now approaches to the treatment of dyslexia and ADHD, vastly more complex than the reference made here, see H.N. Levinson, M.D., *A Scientific Watergate, Dyslexia,* Stonebridge Publishing Ltd, Lake Success, NY, 1994

white page filled with obscure black shapes and forms called letters. Or the even more dramatically complex activity of the hand on a piece of paper with a pencil, trying to make those same strange shapes. The physiological activity requires enormous balance to hold these things together and not become literally seasick. Even more confusing is that this activity creating imbalance does not necessarily indicate a lack of gross motor co-ordination. Coordination can vary from being disturbed at all levels, to being disturbed only on the most subtle. (True dyslexia). In mainstream education we do not recognize the twelve senses as in need of nurturing or training toward harmonious interrelationship. Were this the case, balance would receive a great deal of attention, for here we have the 'I' attempting to orient itself in the world in a harmonious flow.

So as we see, balance as a sense is not simply my standing up and not falling over, but it is activity in relation to the world; activity that gives me my self back and allows me to maintain my equilibrium in the face of whatever the world brings. If we look out over the Grand Canyon we are to varying degrees, momentarily dizzy. If one stands for a moment, the dizzy feeling may pass. We have filled the Grand Canyon with our presence, and it has given us our selves back. It participates in our sense of equilibrium. If we are never able to experience the world giving us our selves back, the sense of balance becomes disturbed, disrupted, out of balance. The disruption of balance causes a certain sinking feeling in the stomach, a dizziness that might be similar to spinning about 10 or 12 times then trying to walk straight. Imagine if this feeling were present every time you wanted to read, or write. What if the experience were much more subtle, so that you could not quite figure out what it was, but you knew you were feeling awful when at school, especially in some classes, but not in others, like art or music. Even recess can be disastrous if the disruption of balance extends to the whole body, as it often does, not just to fine motor skills. And what if lack of coordination is extended to any attempt to participate in games, or even just trying to run across the playground without being laughed at?

As we move into an increasingly technical imagination of education, we become even more fascinated with the tools of education, and decreasingly interested in the whole point of it all, the child himself. Our enchantment with our own cleverness, not only with the gadgets, but also of pedagogical forms that are in theory wonderful for children, is the most dangerous element in the disruption of the senses. This enchantment keeps us inattentive to who is being educated, and attending mostly to how we display our own facility. (Whether with the tools or the pedagogical ideals). Also, the lack of attention to the actual child is a mirror of our lack of attention to our own presence; the activity of our presence and what it conveys merely indicates the disruption of our own senses.

In not attending to these things, lack of balance is an ongoing element in education. If no 'stand' is ever made in relationship to the other, the 'I' of the child is not only not recognized, nurtured and encouraged, but no worthy model of a healthy individual is present in the teacher. This is the ground from which our current dilemma of 'poor self esteem' stems. Being a teacher filled with self esteem is not the fundamental gesture the young child needs to imitate to learn self esteem and thus become imbued with his own self esteem. When the child says 'I', self esteem is present. The teacher who is attempting to convey 'high self esteem' through his or her own self confidence or great facility with every problem or question might just as well be teaching egoism or self righteousness. Being a person able to maintain inner balance – to be one's self and simultaneously present to the other and all the other others – lends an integrity to the soul of the teacher that is worthy of and joyously imitated by the child who is thus being 'taught' to 'fine tune' the fundamental sense of balance.

Children were once the inventors of a myriad of games joyously created in a moment and as readily forgotten in the next, for a new one would appear in a flash to delight the senses. We now enter an age when the senses no longer give us the world, but the simulation of the world we have created. If we teach children to play games that are by their very nature allowing the child to move and interact freely with one another, we return the child to the body and bring about healing in the senses. Children are asked to learn a great deal at increasingly younger ages and we forget that learning to read at three will not quicken in the child a love of learning, but only present the world with a three year-old who can read. But a three year-old who can run and jump and climb and twirl and sweep and turn a somersault is much better prepared to enter the world, and meet that world with equanimity and purpose in later life, because this child lives in balance and with capacities for moving through the world in freedom.

There is much one can do in the realm of activities for children. It is essential that we know why we teach certain skills at specific ages. We must become awake to those things in the world that are calling us to awaken, such as television, computers, electronic and mechanical simulations of the world itself. With each new development of technology, we must renew and strengthen our capacity to observe and be present to the body as the highest expression of the spiritual nature of humanity. Here we must be grateful to technology as the avenue by which we are forced to bring consciousness to that which was once given, but through which we only gazed at as if through a mirror darkly, but are now able to see clearly, face to face. Clear vision requires

greater responsibility, so we must teach the body that which it senses is its own, and not the imitation of the lesser gods, such as modern technology. That is why this book is a blessing disguised as play, a therapy for the soul of the world.

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Introduction

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The Soul that rises with us, our life's star
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home;
Heaven lies about us in our infancy.

Wordsworth

A man once asked a fish:
'What's it like to live in water?'
The fish replied: 'What water?'

The fish then asked the man:
'What's it like to live in space?'
The man replied: 'What space?'

Kim Brooking-Payne

Why play games with children?

An infant is born and as Wordsworth sees, is still enveloped in 'heavenly' forces. In the journey through childhood, each young person encounters and passes through what may be called 'thresholds'. This book is about those thresholds; about how children experience them and how we their helpers can identify and give them expression.

What makes this book different from other books on children's games?

The long journey to reveal or discover ourselves and our life's tasks, is our life story; we can look upon games as the spaces or punctuation in this story, that give the text meaning.

Kim Brooking-Payne

The aim of this book is not only to outline ways of organizing children's games, but also to give the reader a full and fascinating insight into why the game is appropriate for a particular age or stage of development. In this way it may be read both as a guide to child development and as a practical book about games.

Games often go wrong. Throughout the book examples are given of ways to help children who find it difficult to join in – whether they express this by withdrawing, or disrupting and even sabotaging; such children need to find a creative way of playing and also relating in a healthier way both to other children and adults.

Some children experience isolation and ridicule in games. Self-esteem is badly affected and often has lasting negative effects in other areas of life. The games in this book have been specifically developed to value all players regardless of their varying degrees of physical ability. An enjoyable and satisfying role can be found for all those who play. In many of the games, examples will be given of how to work with introverted, unfocused, over-dominant or stubborn children.

The Journey

We often say that children 'grow up' – as indeed they do. What would you think, though, if you were to hear that children also 'grow down' and 'grow in'?

Children grow through games. They first learn as infants about the world around them, and at times their gaze seems to look far beyond the new physical environment that they have come into. They exist partly in the periphery. Then as the years go by they spatially 'come closer' to themselves. They play finger games, clapping games, skipping, romping and running games. They grow more skilful as they learn about space and how to move in it; the games become more demanding, involving greater social complexity and negotiation. The journey from the young child playing finger games to the teenager playing basketball, is a process of coming 'in' and 'down', of growing heavier within the body. A dynamic exists between growing 'up' and 'down'; and also between 'growing in' to oneself and 'growing out' into the world.

Such a view is of special interest to the teacher or therapist; it increases our ability to perceive when a child has become 'stuck' in a particular stage, and to help her overcome the obstruction simply by getting involved in certain games and activities. This may be a controversial approach, but is also a fascinating concept worthy of exploration. Time and again I have witnessed difficult emotional and behavioural problems eased when the right activity is offered and taken up by the child. Suspicious or guarded reactions that may have existed in conversation, begin to fade when a particular game is introduced. The barriers to healing then also begin to fall away.

HIDDEN TREASURES:

HINTS AND TIPS FOR TEACHING GAMES

Presenting games to children

Essentially there are three aspects to consider when presenting a game:

Abstraction: Some children have the ability to follow an explanation given in a verbal, diagrammatic, intellectual way. Young people in their middle to latter teens often have a developing capacity for this, and can therefore cope with such an emphasis.

Pictorial: Another group of children will relate more strongly to an explanation that has images, pictures or even a story to set out what needs to be done. The play area may be a jungle or a sea where tigers or sharks prowl. The tree or wall may be a castle, or have magic so that when you touch it you become invisible and cannot be tagged. A majority of children from about 4-5 until about 11-12 years old will be imaginatively enriched by these methods. It also makes the game more vivid and alive.

It may seem strange to suggest that children are not harmed by frightening images, such as sharks and giants which chase them. Many of the images children naturally bring into their play are mythologically-based monsters and creatures, that are expressions of deep sub-conscious emotions. When these images are evoked in games, children are provided with an opportunity to bring up emotions that exist below the surface – to express and work through, in a child-like way, fears and aspirations they secretly harbour.

Another major advantage in presenting games in this way is that it takes emphasis away from the physical nature of the activity. It allows children of all ability to find a role. It stimulates creativity, helps break down fear of the equipment. Many children, for example, have a fear of using balls; but when the ball becomes a sword that has to be avoided, or a precious treasure that has to be protected, it is amazing how cheerfully they will join in.

Children who focus too early on physical ability unenriched by imagination, often experience frustration when they can't achieve the standards of those teenagers and grown-ups they are trying to emulate. They can become fanatical, over-interested in winning, and at times anti-social or even disruptive. Images help these 'spatially and behaviourally precocious' children to relax and play the game for its own sake and for enjoyment.

Imitative: Some children prefer to see the game or activity demonstrated. They need the leader either to show how it is done or place the players in their positions and have a 'walk through' before the real play begins. This is very strengthening for the child's will: she sees what needs doing and sets out to achieve it. This faculty is at its strongest in the first 5 to 6 years. Children will often learn complex finger or string games in minutes, that have taken the adult hours to work out. It is at this age that the children will often imitate household activities such as washing up or digging in the garden. This is a very healthy kind of 'game' which is to be strongly encouraged (even if does take twice as long to finish the job!) It is the basis for healthy will-development that is vital for future inner strength.

In general

Although I have outlined these three aspects of learning and attributed them to various ages, this is only intended as a general guideline. For example, in introducing an activity to teenagers – such as shooting goals in basketball – the leader will draw on all three aspects. She may explain the technical approach – such as body and hand position; bring in an image – like imagining the basketball rim is a bookshelf that the player is trying to land the ball on; and then demonstrate how to do it. In doing so, she has touched the abstract, the pictorial, and the imitative learners.

Of course all of us have all three tendencies within ourselves. It is therefore more a question of which quality is dominant at certain ages and in varying situations. Potentially the most challenging aspect of this is that we as adults also have certain dominant tendencies; it is our task to become aware of them in order to include and stimulate all children in the group. We may for example have a tendency to explain in abstract form what is required; and when certain children in the group 'don't get it', we may look for other words to describe the task, yet still remain 'stuck' in the realm of abstract communication. If the child continues not to get it, she may begin to feel excluded, and even start to disrupt others. We may then end up disciplining or punishing the child, although it is ourselves and our lack of consciousness that lay at the root of the problem.

Using your own creativity

Use the children's own environments as much as possible. Don't only use images of the country, of rivers and mountains, but also of the city and of urban life when explaining new games and their rules. Only 5% of the population of the U.S.A. lives in rural settings, and this trend is echoed in most western cultures.

Children often use games to connect with, or make sense of their environment, or their family or school situations. For example I once overheard a skipping rhyme in a playground that dealt with a child's experience and understanding of divorce. It went something like...

Mum and Dad went to war,
Went to the judge, found the law.
Mumma on Monday,
Daddy on Tuesday,
Mumma on Wednesday,
Daddy on Thursday
Mumma on Friday,
Daddy on Saturday,
Sunday day of rest!

I am of course not suggesting that adults should make up similar rhymes, personal to the child involved; we can leave that to the children's own resources and self-expression. But we can think back to our own childhood and re-teach some of the traditional rhymes, or we may even make up some new ones. It is so very satisfying to present a new rhyme to the children that you have especially made up for them, and for days and weeks afterwards hear them merrily chanting it.

Also use the seasons: games can be invented that use autumn leaves, the puddles in winter, and snow. For instance, I recently watched some children playing a simple game of tag. One child sat curled up, covered in autumn leaves, while the others approached him cautiously. Imagine the excitement when the leaves rustled, or when he finally burst out of the heap and chased them back to 'home'!

Language of the playground

With the onslaught of television, videos, computer games and computer based learning in school, many children are beginning to lose the old rhymes and traditional games that play such a vital role in our learning, creativity, and ability to interact socially in a healthy way. What I call 'playground culture' is today only a vague shadow of what, in the not so distant past, was rich, boisterous activity. The oral tradition, in which games and rhymes were passed down, is breaking down. Children are forgetting how to relate and talk to each other. The generation that was born in the 1950s, 60s and even the 70s is probably the last to remember something of these traditional games. Even in Asian and many African cultures, the stories and games are being lost. It is therefore up to us, as 'human reference libraries', to teach our children so that they in turn may teach each other. It involves us rolling up our sleeves and spending not only quality time, but fun time with our children. Once they are into the swing of things, we can quietly withdraw and leave them to it.

Whilst initially you may have to help children sort out their disputes, it is good to gradually withdraw as they relearn the 'art of playing'. The disputes won't necessarily become fewer, but the quality of the resolution will become much fairer and clearer. Marbles, skipping, hopscotch, the many chasing games, wrestling and duelling games, ball games such as four square, all find a thirsty audience of children willing to try them out. The group quickly grows. At first the concentration-span may be short, depending on how they have spent their leisure time; but slowly the 'healing' will take place. We can give children back a childhood – and one of the most potent ways is to reteach them a forgotten but once much-loved language, the language of games.

BULLYING

Why play games to help counteract bullying? Games work at a deeper level on the dynamic of victimisation than our usual reaction of talking (or lecturing) to students, or giving somewhat meaningless or even harmful detentions or punishments. There are many games which you can play to help both bullies and their victims into more social ways of interacting with others. This is not to say that this is the only answer; but I have seen how games really can change the social constellation of a group of children, including unhealthy patterns like victimisation. Carefully designed and supervised games have the advantage of helping control the level of exposure and contact between the bully and victim without fueling any particular crisis or conflict; at the same time, the whole group goes through the experience of the social dynamics of the game. The focus shifts from a personality conflict into a more situational or objective view. By means of a game, it is for example possible to transform a blanket statement such as 'I hate John', into something like 'I hate it when John does that'. A game can provide the opportunity for working on a problem area, without dismissing completely the person who is being bullied.

Games also give the bully (and the rest of the children) a chance to express the positive aspects of her strength as a leader. The child who bullies often has deep seated insecurities, which make her seek peer approval. She will try to seek this approval by taunting or tormenting others while being watched by her peers. The bully will very often pick on

others who are weaker in some way than she is. Often the bully will be stronger than the victim – usually physically but also verbally. Games can use this strength and energy in a healthy and positive way. In games such as *Wolf and Sheep*, *Cat and Mouse House*, or *Coupe*, the bully is called on to use her strength to protect someone weaker than herself.

Children who bully have often acquired or had this behaviour triggered in a myriad of differing ways. An environment of aggression at home or in the playground, family crisis, sudden change, learning difficulties and frustrations, role modelling from aggressive adults she sees at home, or from sports or music stars. Games can show these children how to channel their aggression in a more positive way. A child who continues to show aggression in an inappropriate way, will often ruin the game and thus risk losing peer approval. It is interesting to note that the playground can be either the worst environment – breeding all sorts of unhealthy behaviour; or the best – where children learn to co-operate whilst still standing up for what they think is right. Playgrounds and play time at home can be transformed when teachers and parents take an active interest in reintroducing games. The 'Killing Fields' can become the 'Healing Fields.'

The poem, 'Back in the Playground Blues' graphically describes the bullying experience:

As well as being weaker in some way, or smaller, the victim of bullying may often appear visibly different from others: e.g. wearing glasses, of a different skin colour etc. In games that are carefully planned, these differences can be 'defocused' – or the positive aspect of the difference can be emphasised. For instance, I have placed an overweight child as the anchor of a Tug-of-War – with much success! Or smaller children, who are often very nimble and quick, may be given tasks in a game that require these qualities (for example, in chasing games that demand fast, sudden changes of direction, such as many of the Cat and Mouse games). Slow thinkers often have an ability to picture: they catch on to games that are described in picture form much quicker than those who are more 'intellectual'. The shy, withdrawn child is often a good observer – and may well shine as a prison guard or watch-tower person in a game. For instance, in *Storm the Castle.*

The victim will also benefit from the structure that a game provides: all too often bullying occurs during unstructured times: break-times, after school, etc. I find that if I introduce a game that the children enjoy, they will continue to play during break-time: which means that there is less chance of bullying taking place.

If you play games that allow the potential victim to display her hidden talents, this will help her peers to see her strengths and she will win more peer approval. Lack of self-esteem, and the loss of peer approval is the root of much anti-social behaviour.

However if bullying does occur:

* Quickly defuse the incident, and take attention away from it. Otherwise further polarisation will occur. Instead focus on the feelings and the implications involved.

* Do not punish or blame the bully. This will only increase the isolation and pressure on the victim so that bullying becomes more hidden.

* Don't berate the bully in front of her peers. This will only gain her status and reinforce her image as a 'bad girl'.

* Don't spend hours talking. Design fun outings or activities that the bully, victim and a couple of friends can take part in.

The main purpose of not 'blaming' the bully is that a culture of 'telling' needs to be cultivated throughout the school and the community. Anyone who sees bullying, or is being bullied, needs to feel they can speak up and 'tell', and know that they will not be persecuted for doing so. This can only be achieved if all concerned know they are safe and respected by teachers and parents; and that the issue will be dealt with thoroughly.

Work in small groups and listen to the children's ideas of how they think they can make things better.

Back in the Playground Blues

I dreamed I was back in the playground. I was about four feet high.
Yes I dreamed I was back in the playground, standing about four feet high.
Well the playground was three miles long and the playground was five miles wide.
It was broken black tarmac with a high wire fence all around,
Broken black dusty tarmac with a high fence running all around
And it had a special name to it, The Killing Ground.

Got a mother and a father, they're one thousand miles away
The rulers of The Killing Ground are coming out to play
Everybody thinking: 'Who they going to play with today?'

Well you get it for being Jewish
And you get it for being black
Get it for being chicken
And you get it for fighting back
You get it for being big and fat
Get it for being small
Oh those who get it, get it and get it
For any damn thing at all.

Sometimes they take a beetle, tear off its six legs one by one.
Beetle on its black back, rocking in the lunchtime sun.
But a beetle can't beg for mercy, a beetle's not half the fun.
I heard a deep voice talking, it had that iceberg sound:
'It prepares them for life' – but I never found
Any place in my life worse than The Killing Ground.

Adrian Mitchell (1984)

How to pick teams

Letting two nominated team captains choose their own teams often leads to the strongest (or most popular) players being chosen first, and the weakest last. This situation can be difficult for individual children; so over the years I have used other methods to choose teams.

* A simple way is to make a circle and ask every second player (sometimes in pairs) to step forward, thus creating two circles. To make a circle ask all players to form a line behind you and simply set off walking or jogging with the children following, moving into a circle. Keep moving until the circle is evenly spaced.

* For 11 or 12 year old and upwards, I ask first one team captain (of Team A) to choose a player, then the next team captain (of Team B) to choose someone of the same ability as the player just selected for Team A. If you can subtly ask the captains to vary their choices (e.g. not all the strong players first), it will be a more satisfying experience for the whole group. Alternatively if this does not work, the children can organise themselves into pairs of equal ability. If a team captain chooses one of the pair, the other partner joins the opposition team. The two captains take it in turns to have the first selection of each partner.

* Traditional counting-out rhymes can also be used. The players form a circle or a line and on each word of the rhyme the child doing the counting moves, touches or points to another player. The player touched when the last word of the rhyme is spoken, is on one team. The rhyme begins again, the process is repeated, but this time the last player joins the other side. This is repeated until all children have their team.

Going out

When a child fails to skip over the rope, catch the ball, etc. and 'goes out' I prefer not to make her sit out for the rest of the game. Most of the games therefore, suggest ways of not permanently excluding the player who goes 'out'. I usually have the children form a going-out/coming-in queue, as follows: Chris goes out, and becomes number 1 in the queue. He is joined by Patty, who is number 2. When Belinda is out, she joins the queue and becomes number 2. Patty is the new number 1, and Chris rejoins the game. So there are never more

than two, or however many children you choose, in the going-out/coming-in queue. 'Forfeits' are also a very traditional way of dealing with a mistake that is made within a game. These often take the form of an agreed penalty. If you get hit in a skipping game, for example, you may be asked to make three jumps on only one leg. If you can do this then you are allowed to go back to two-footed skipping.

When explaining the game

Expand the context by using imaginative pictures. It can help to have younger children sitting on the ground around you while you tell them the story of the game. I call this the 'huddle', where we form a tight little group, all sitting; this allows me to talk quietly to the children about what it is we are about to do. I often tell them a short story that contains in it the picture of the game we are about to play.

Alternatively, for children who are a little older, explaining a game while they are standing (or sitting) in a circle is also effective. I often ask the children to form a 'toe circle', meaning that we should stand in a circle looking at our feet and make sure that a perfect circle is achieved, so that all our feet are side by side. This gives the players something to focus on, and it is surprisingly quick to achieve a form that otherwise may take some time.

In ball games, always keep the ball in your hands when clarifying or explaining. We sometimes use what we call the 'talking ball'.

This means that only the person holding the ball may speak; all others must remain quiet and listen. When she has finished talking or asking a question, the ball is passed back to the game leader who then may pass it to another child who wishes to speak. I have found this very helpful; accepting it helps the children learn to respect each other's right to speak, and, what's more, to be heard.

Endings

It is very important for the players, especially for young children (3-9 years old) that a game has a definite ending. Just as a story has an ending, a journey has a destination, and a letter a closing greeting, so should a game have a defined outcome. The leader should tell the children *before the game begins* how the ending will come about. Whilst this may seem obvious, some games that begin enthusiastically end in a sloppy or, worse, an argumentative manner, because the ending has not been clearly defined.

It is very important for players from about 10 years old and upwards, to *review the game* just played. This allows them to develop reflective thought, quietens them and allows a conscious finish to the game-time. I would even go so far as to suggest that a moment of complete silence, perhaps 10-15 seconds at the very end, helps the young person 'absorb' on a deeper level all the bodily activity that she has been engaged in while playing the game. With the younger ones, a simple story echoing the game's character will serve the same purpose. Children playing freely in their own time tend to do this 'review' quite naturally. When walking home they can often be heard discussing the failures and triumphs of all that occurred.

BREAKING THE RULES:

SABOTAGING THE GAME ... CONFLICT

Why? How do we deal with it?

Children seek the security of behavioural boundaries. It is partly the way they learn about the world and what is acceptable. They will often create very elaborate rules for a game and then have to develop consequences when one of the players infringes these. The rules are often quite sophisticated and the penalties harsh. However, when the game is played the next day it may well develop new dynamic; someone has a good idea, and therefore the rules will adapt. In this way a great deal of our social abilities are learnt and refined.

Some children are habitual rule-breakers. It is almost as if they can't help themselves. Others may do it less often. Some will do it very openly, even in a challenging way. Others will be more secretive. This tendency may exist for a number of different reasons and have just as many implications for the rule-breaker as for other children.

There is a reasonably common correlation between the children who regularly break rules – and more importantly, resist attempts to be held responsible and accept the consequences – with the particular kind of life they lead outside the game environment. This usually falls into one of two categories.

The first, and the most common, is the child who has an abnormally loose home-life, where she seldom experiences restrictions, or, if there are any, the consequences for breaking them are either ill-defined or not followed through. Such a child may have a great deal of unsupervised leisure time. She has difficulty in relating to the rules. She will seldom take the opportunity to participate in their formation and will either show little interest in others who bend or break them; or overreact, displaying little understanding of the situation. If the matter is pressed by the other players she will threaten to withdraw, at times very vocally, or the others will have to find a way to adapt the rules to suit her. They may even turn a blind eye to further infringements.

In a supervised situation where an adult is present, this child will be helped if encouraged to be a central part of the game. You may choose her to be one of the team captains, or have an important role. You may try to encourage the child to take part in the rule forming. She will also be helped by sharing in

the 'ownership' of the game. This can be achieved, for example, by giving her responsibility for being the only one to hold the ball in certain situations, or to give out the various pieces of equipment that may be needed. When a rule is broken, encourage the rule-breaker to find a new rule if she disagrees with the present ones. This is a helpful tone to adopt with a child who is lacking in form.

The second is the child who experiences the other extreme; who is subject to very authoritative, abnormally restrictive parenting, for whom the consequence of any disobedience is swift and unbending and does not easily take mitigating circumstances into account. Such a child will usually seek to be central in the rule forming process and try to impose rules and consequences which are unimaginative and rigid. If accused of an infringement this child will argue strongly, and if pressed may even seek to redefine the rules so as to accommodate her action. If this fails, she can often become extremely upset and demonstrate threatening behaviour, in much the same way as she has perhaps been treated by parents.

Initially she can be asked to help mediate in the disputes of others, which is a task she will relate well to; however she must then also nominate another, or a small group, to take the role of judge. She may argue a case and be heard but should also be encouraged to agree to accept their decision. Eventually this child may be given the task of adapting the rules whenever the need arises. It may be necessary to inform the parents of her difficulties and of how you intend helping her.

Behaviour disturbance and the Temperaments

But there are also other types of rule-breakers. Some children naturally relate to rules better than others. This is a more deep-seated attribute than has just been outlined – which may be called acquired behaviour. This more deep-rooted quality is generally known as disposition or temperament. It does have an important bearing on children's relationship to rules and consequences.

Considering children according to only four main categories of temperament may seem to be a pigeonholing, rigid approach. In fact the opposite is true. *There are few greater gifts one can give another person than a sincere attempt to understand them.* This is particularly true if some of their actions seem to be negative and even bring you into conflict with them. Trying to empathise on a deep, insightful level can defuse what may have become a cycle of destructive behaviour, and open up new possibilities of relating. The idea of temperaments is a very useful aid to developing this understanding and empathy.

The first and most important step is to try to define your own temperament as objectively as possible. Be as honest as possible in identifying your own dominant tendencies. One of the best ways to identify your own or another's temperament is to ask: 'What temperament/s am I *not*?' This should leave you with the answer. Of course we have all four temperaments within us, but usually one or two will be dominant. After observing yourself for some time you may notice that one temperament will tend to come to the fore in certain situations.

The second task such empathy asks of you is to put aside preconceived feelings you hold for the other person. Listen and consciously observe their behaviour, without being judgmental. The fact that you can do this often brings a new clarity into the relationship.

Thirdly, what can you do to help the situation? What follows may both stimulate recognitions and indicate possible ways forward:

The Napolean ... The Choleric The Fire Breather

There are those who see rules as constricting boundaries, infringements of their rights. Such people are normally extrovert and dominant; they may well be stocky and thick-set and dig their heels in when walking. Their speech is emphatic and deliberate. They see games as a personal challenge providing them with the possibility for conquest. They may often have a poor memory and a restless nature, impatient to act before the explanation of a game is finished.

Sometimes they break rules simply because they have either forgotten them or did not listen in the first place. They will seek to blame others for their own mistakes. This tendency can cause problems, as many other players will see that it was the choleric's own fault and that it is therefore not fair to blame anyone else. This in turn will lead to a 'digging in of the heels' on the part of the Napoleon.

Such children need careful handling in a conflict situation as they have a strong sense of pride. Speak to them quietly or, in more extreme circumstances, defer the conversation until they have calmed down. If you insist on 'having it out there and then', you may well harden their attitude, and their behaviour will become more reckless and outrageous. Be careful with criticism, especially in front of others. Affirm their positive deeds, particularly those that involved courage or daring. Draw on their leadership ability; for example if they have withdrawn or are refusing to let the game continue, you may tell them that the game needs their input, that they are very strong players. Whilst the cause and particularly the solution may seem clear to you, the only way this type of child can become 'unstuck' is if she can still continue to feel in control, and not lose face. Any solution that you may whisper may well be taken up by such children and loudly proclaimed to the other players as their own idea, which everyone should take note of.

Be discreet yet strong. Make sure that once a decision is made it is final. Don't waffle, be to the

point. You may even challenge such a child by saying that she has stopped playing because she's not up to it; or that you will ask someone else. Whilst the choleric will push you to change your mind, you will win her respect for standing firm.

In Australia when a bush fire is burning out of control, the fire fighters sometimes light a 'back burn'. This involves deliberately lighting another fire that is carefully calculated to collide with the initial, uncontrolled blaze. The destructive bush fire can then be extinguished, for there is no more fuel to burn. This principle can also be used to help a choleric child who has got to the point of shouting in anger; you can reply with the same, or even with increased intensity. It is vital that this is not done in anger but with a conscious wish to help her. If at all possible this should not be done in front of others and should be used only occasionally.

The Butterfly ... The Sanguine
The Air Rider

These children do not really break rules, they disregard them. They see rules as applying mainly to others who have the misfortune to need them. They like to move freely from one situation to another, never stopping for too long at any one place. They are often slender and well built, lively, graceful and eloquent. Their friendships are frequently fickle and changeable. Like the choleric they have a poor memory; but they do have an ability to notice much of what is going on around them. They relate very much to the present moment.

Sanguines do not feel overly challenged when accused of violating rules, and will seldom get into an argument. They seem to accept all that has been said; other players may often feel they have sorted the problem out, only to find that the butterfly child has taken very little notice and has repeated the breach. This will sometimes provoke others' fury, because 'she keeps messing thing up'. The only way to deal with it seems to be either to tolerate this charmingly infuriating behaviour or to exclude the child from the game. But the sanguine can also at times have wild temper tantrums, which can be quite disturbing to the other children; if you the adult, though, don't get caught up in the whirlwind, but instead remain calmly detached, assuring the others that this is just something that she does from time to time, you will often find that the tantrum ends quickly.

The butterfly child has what may be called a 'hit and run' method of expressing anger or discontent. She may say or do hurtful or outrageous things and then very quickly change the subject or leave the room, leaving others (particularly the melancholics) to cope with the destruction and mop up the mess. She may later deny that she meant anything, saying that it was just a joke or that it is everybody else's problem for taking things so seriously. Sanguine children do this (often with real skill) in an attempt to avoid what causes them great discomfort – consequences.

Attempting to point out to sanguines what they have been responsible for, and asking them to take the consequences, is like trying to catch a butterfly or a grasshopper on a warm summer's day. The only way to stand any chance of success is to use a net. When working with groups the best 'net' that can be used is to involve as many people as is manageable to reflect back to the sanguine the effects of her behaviour. Invite others to tell the sanguine how she is both positively and negatively influencing what is being said or done. Do this with lightness yet directness. Use the same words often. Identify a word or a phrase that can be called out, one that playfully exposes when the 'hit and run' tactics are being employed.

However there are other ways. In a supervised situation where conflict occurs, act immediately. If you delay, the sanguine may well have moved on to the next adventure and will show little interest in a problem that is past. The sanguine's ability to sympathise can be called on. Ask her to try and appreciate how frustrating it must be for the others. Alternatively you may ask her to remedy the situation as a personal favour to you. The 'butterflies' respond with great warmth to the cultivation of personal contact. Whilst their interest in many aspects of life may seem superficial, their real devotion can be awakened through personal connection.

The Comfort Zone ... The Phlegmatic
The Water Dweller

The phlegmatics have a love of the rules. 'For everything a place, and a place for everything' could be their motto. They seldom break the rules, but if they do and agree that they did, they will accept the consequence with good grace. If however they don't agree, they will refuse all penalties and stubbornly insist they were not in the wrong. They may become quite immovable no matter how much pressure is brought to bear. Normally slow to complain or express anger, they can react with intensity when someone breaks a rule and won't own up.

The phlegmatics are often round and fleshy and walk with an ambling, constant gait, and have slow but well-defined gestures. They are logical, amiable but somewhat withdrawn. In a game situation, they will – if interested – be good team players and will adopt a supportive role; if they know the game well they may also occasionally emerge as leader. They are strategists, able to make elaborate plans if given the time. They need lots of warning about anything new. If told to do something that they don't want to, they will prefer to be quietly non co-operative, rather than openly disagree.

The anger of the phlegmatic is like a tidal wave, which forms far out to sea – slowly, silently swelling and growing – but then strikes land with a

devastating force. It is all-consuming and reckless, anything that gets in its path is engulfed. The previously gentle, lapping waves and predictable tides now wreak havoc. If one carefully observes phlegmatics, early warning signs of an approaching outburst can be detected. Just as the regular patterns of the tides begin to change erratically before a tempest, so too do the phlegmatic's normal responses. The normal easy-going attitude may become a little touchy; she may become less tolerant or withdraw deep into herself. Her all-important routines may become disrupted. Or you may simply feel that something is not quite right. Of course you may ask if there is anything bothering her and show a patient and unthreatening attitude; but if that doesn't work, then batten down the hatches and head for high ground, putting in any damage limitations that you can think of – like warning other members in the family or class not to take it too personally or get too involved in her anger. Screaming matches will achieve little. She will particularly need you and others around her to be in good shape to comfort her in the aftermath, and to help her begin the reconstruction process. You will not be so effective in this if you get too involved in the accusations and anger.

A tidal wave also often alters the old shore line, where water meets the land. The sea will recede far beyond its normal mark, exposing much previously submerged terrain. This earth is bare, uncultivated and unmapped. This has obvious parallels with the phlegmatic's rare outbursts. Not only does the anger affect and challenge many old forms and routines, it also offers the potential for new growth and change. This is a delicate time. It may take quite a few days of you consoling and reassuring her, before you can gently suggest areas of positive change. You will need to give her time to think this over as her processing of thoughts and ideas resembles the tortoise more than the hare, but let her know that's fine. She will be feeling raw, perhaps guilty and almost certainly exposed. Phlegmatics' possibility for change is inextricably bound up with their anger.

When the phlegmatic becomes 'stuck' either in her dreamy apathy or her stubbornness, don't be afraid to speak immediately, sharply and consciously. One does not need to raise one's voice, though; a calm intensity is the right tone. This usually serves to jolt her a little out of her problem. You can also draw on her strong mothering instinct, perhaps pointing out to her that there are many in the game that need her care.

A phlegmatic will often be heard to say wearily 'This is boring'. In these instances you may choose to take her boredom to it's limits. Ask her to sit out of the activity and do nothing, absolutely nothing! She may well enjoy it for a while, but stay with it; and every time she comes back, ask her to sit out again so she may fully 'enjoy' her boredom. Let her know that you are not angry with her, but make little attempt to engage. It may take several sessions; but eventually she will probably idle up to you and ask if she can join in, at which point she is warmly welcomed. Superficially this may seem like a small thing, but on a deeper level it is an important developmental shift – one that may well have positive implications for her life in general.

The Wilting Lily ... The Melancholic The Earth Carrier

What particularly leads the melancholics into conflict is their self-absorption. They are amazed, hurt and sullen if accused of wrong-doing. They are so engrossed in themselves that they cannot easily see another player's point of view. The melancholic hears every complaint as a wounding attack aimed only at herself. She may lash out with personal, subjective comments about the players who are challenging her, but will not easily focus on the source of the problem at hand – such as the rule-infringement. She is very sensitive to sarcasm directed at herself, yet will freely use it towards others. It is these tendencies that combine to make the melancholic an open target for teasing and bullying.

The melancholic's anger sometimes resembles a sniper sitting hidden in a safe or camouflaged area, shooting hurtful or destructive comments at anyone who is a perceived threat and comes within range. The more one aggressively searches for the sniper, the more she retreats behind her cover and redoubles the shooting in an attempt to protect herself. This is dangerous for all concerned. Even if you do manage, often wounded, to expose her hide-out, you will have to try to take hold of a prisoner whose only options are to try to escape or give in to your will.

Far better to assure the melancholic that you understand her pain, and that you are no threat. Wave a white flag and walk the ground between your position and the place she has retreated to, slowly letting her know that you don't blame her for what she has done, but that it is causing both herself and others some pain; and that you would like to help sort it out. Only then may the sniper allow you to approach. Whilst she may not give up her weapon, the next time a conflict occurs she will recognise you, which may make your negotiation easier.

The melancholic finds it difficult to join in even though she would like to. She stands on the edge of situations, restrained by imagining injury, insult, intimidation and generally all the bad things that may happen if she gets involved. She is often thin and willowy, her demeanour resigned, her complexion sallow. She may speak haltingly, pausing to consider what people think of her. She has a low pain threshold, feeling every bump and knock. Her friends will be few; she prefers to make special bonds with one or two others. She likes

solitary activities such as reading and painting; and long walks in nature where she takes note of all the small details she sees. She has a long memory when it comes to things she has been involved in, and a strong relationship to the past.

But for each of these difficult traits the melancholic displays, there exists a positive one. A bridge needs to be constructed from her introverted self, over the perceived dangerous waters, to the world on the other side, the world that exists outside herself.

It does no good to try and console the melancholic with statements like 'Never mind, it wasn't that bad really'. This merely confirms for her that no-one understands; and increases her feeling of isolation. Far better to empathise, or try to imagine the melancholic's sense of all the bad things that have happened or may happen. If you observe her watching a game from the sidelines, it's helpful to talk to her about how hard it is to join in. Sympathise with her, for example, about that situation two years ago when someone called her an awful name: 'If the same child does it again', you can say, 'just feel sorry for him that he has to do such a thing to make himself seem important'. The melancholic will have to try and overcome the hurt; you as the adult can reassure her that you will notice if such a thing happens again.

Melancholics also have a well-developed capacity to notice suffering in others. This can be a wonderful quality if they are helped to see what they can do to assist other people. If they feel that they are making a sacrifice, they may well go to great lengths to be of service.

While it is important to show understanding to the melancholic, be wary of going too far and becoming morose. Sympathise with past events and future fears in a kindly but matter of fact way, showing that whilst you understand her feelings, there is also a steady hand safely directing the situation.

The adult reaction

Children who break the rules can be annoying, even infuriating to the adult. You can have the feeling that no matter what the situation, the same child will inevitably try to disrupt or become difficult in some way. It gets to the stage where you are anticipating it, even warning the child that you will not stand for it again.

This can result in an escalating conflict situation where your reactions become somewhat unconscious. Looking back in the evening, you will perhaps be disturbed less by the actions of the child than by your own lack of control.

The type of response we give in a conflict situation is seldom straightforward. However, there are a few basic 'checks' that you can do. First and foremost, examine your own temperament. For example, do you have choleric tendencies? When the child shouted at you in front of others, did you react too forcefully because you could not stand to lose face? Or were you so keen to 'get on with things' that your explanation of the game was too quick? This may have resulted in some children not knowing what to do and therefore playing up.

Did the situation spiral out of control because of your sanguine nature, which prevented you noticing the warning signs? Was your explanation of the game so disjointed that the conflict arose because some players disagreed about what to do?

Was that caustic, sarcastic comment you made a result of your melancholic nature? Did you feel personally wounded by some of the children telling you that the game was 'dumb' and that they would not play any more?

Were you over-connected to the form of the game you had so carefully and slowly planned, that when the child sabotaged it you reacted strongly?

These are just a few examples of the many reactions we may have that are influenced by our own disposition. It is essential that we not only look at the part the child played but more importantly at our own response. *It is the adult's responsibility to reach the child, not the child's to reach the adult.* There may be some difficult situations that you feel you handled well. Look at these, learn from your successes. Why is it that the child was able to calm down and accept what you suggested?

It is often helpful to look at your own biography, particularly at that part of it which relates to the same age as the child or group that you had the difficult situation with. For example you may ask yourself: 'Is there a connection between my overreaction towards that child who was picking on a smaller boy, connected to my own small stature and the fact that I was bullied at that age?' or: 'Is the reason I don't really grasp the difficult situation due to an unconscious fear of conflict? Are my reactions connected with defensive or avoidance tactics?' These questions and others may arise if we have the willingness to look into ourselves. Addressing a difficult situation may not only help the children to grow up stronger, but also help the adult to deal with some of her own unresolved feelings. The child unconsciously respects the adult who is able to deal with her own weaknesses in a searching way.

EQUIPMENT

Use of equipment

It is important that the children are active in setting up and putting away equipment – if this is practicable. When the children are active in these processes, they not only get more exercise but are also helped to feel 'ownership' of the game. They tend, therefore, to place a greater value on what goes on when playing it. They also learn how to set up games for themselves, and thus no longer have to be wholly reliant on an adult to get a game started and finished.

This idea can be taken even further in the actual designing, making or collecting, of equipment for the game. Old pieces of wood can become goals or bats; blankets or sacks become bases, screens, caves etc. Many hours of real enjoyment can be had transforming 'junk' into equipment that will be used over and over again. The child experiences process. I firmly believe that what may be called 'process-less-ness' is at the root of many of the social ills that afflict our young people today. Making up a game and fashioning a bat or other equipment, is no small thing in helping the child to develop strong, individual values, empathy for others, and the ability to see something through to the end.

The portable gymnasium

Very few schools or clubs around the world are lucky enough to have a gymnasium or even a well-kept and defined playing area at their disposal. Over the years I have used a simple way to define a play area. I buy a long rope, which is normally very cheap, of at least 100 metres in length, and lay the rope down on the ground as a perimeter. If children leave this area, they are 'out'; I usually ask them to come back in through the 'door', which I 'open' after letting them stay outside for a while. The 'door' is where the rope has an end and where it meets itself. For example you may lay out a circle or a rectangle, using all or part of the rope according to the game and the number of players. If you want a really top-of-the-range 'portable gym' you may buy several hundred metres of rope and a winder (usually found in garden shops) that is normally used for winding up garden hoses. In this way, setting up, packing up, and storage, are easy and efficient.

You may wish to supplement this set-up with a few witches' hats or cones (never, of course 'borrowed' from road-side works) to give a good profile to your court area.

This cheap and simple piece of equipment is very helpful – particularly in chasing games, in which the more determined chaser and escaper may disappear over the distant horizon, much to the alarm of the leader and the amusement of the children!

Playing-balls

For chasing games where children 'brand' (i.e. strike) each other with the ball, a FOAM PRACTICE VOLLEYBALL (non-sting) is recommended. These can easily be bought from any good sports shop or catalogue. Instead of this you can also use a slightly deflated volley ball, or more sturdy beach ball. What is important is that when you are branded with the ball, you are not hurt in any way. The fear of being hurt by the ball is very common for many children and prevents them from entering into, and gaining valuable experiences in games. These 'softy' balls are perfect; they allow the strong players to hurl the ball as hard as they like whilst the more sensitive players know that they can enjoy the game without being intimidated.

For younger children, a foam or wool ball covered in fabric, the size of a beach ball is useful (e.g. for *There was a little Mouse*). Of course you may vary the size and weight of the ball according to the game and the age of the child. It is a wonderful thing to make a ball with the help of children. I have tried many different designs. One of the most successful is made by wrapping a large amount of old woollen thread round and round a tennis ball, until the desired weight and size is achieved. Then sew strips of cotton, woollen or polyester material together to form a rough sphere-shape. Finally place the thread-wound ball inside the material – and you have a wonderful play ball. You may substitute real wool, not yet spun, instead of yarn. This makes the ball lighter. Other variations are to first cut a small hole in the tennis ball and pour in some sand, which makes the end product heavier. If you have a lot of old stockings you can put the wool-wound ball inside it and sew it up. Build up the layers of nylon stocking by repeating this last step over and over until you have a good strong covering.

These balls are ideal for inside- or rainy-day use as they are a little more forgiving on the lightshades and other objects; but they can also be used out of doors on dry days.

Tennis Balls

Tennis balls can be used for ball games if necessary. For games that involve branding, I make the tennis ball softer by piercing a hole in it with a sharp object. Alternatively, wrapping some woollen thread around them will soften them. Low impact tennis balls are also on the market at the moment. They are generally used for 'short tennis'. The advantage of these balls is that they are not quite as bouncy as ordinary tennis balls and are much easier to control.

I remember playing against-the-wall-type branding games as a child, in which the tennis ball was dipped in water to make it really sting when it hit you! This was a game for the 'hard core', tough, branding players.

Whilst not advocating this game as a builder of world peace, it is interesting that some children will naturally, of their own accord, toughen up some games in order to test themselves and take things to the limit. As adults we may be alarmed at such activity, but some children need and want it.

Mini basket balls

These are useful for introducing rounders as they offer a bigger surface area to hit. However, they don't tend to fly so far when struck – which can lead to over-crowding around the hitter. They are also fine for playground games such as 4-square, but are not as good as slightly softer and bouncier playground balls. They should be slightly deflated to the size of a large grapefruit. If they are too hard, little fingers can be hurt. These balls are terrible in branding games.

Hula hoops

These are useful to mark a small area e.g. *Shipwrecks* (game 131), *Trains and Stations* (game 142). They can also be held up as targets and of course used in their own right.

Coloured bands

Bands or bibs to identify teams or individuals are always useful, e.g. *Crows and Cranes* (game 96). I have often been astonished at the prices of these in sports shops. They can be made very cheaply and easily. Cut up a single-coloured, sturdy piece of material into strips about 4-5 foot long and 2-3 inches wide (120-150 by 5-6cm). Sew both ends together, making a band that is worn 'sash-like' across the chest and around the back. For a professional job, use a sewing machine and fold a little of the band-edge back on itself; sew along it, making a hem or seam. Make as many as you need in one colour and repeat the process with another.

Whistles

These are not appropriate in games for children up to 10 years of age. The voice is so much better. Even after the age of ten, a clear, loud direction is better than a whistle. Only in formalised sport is regular use of whistles necessary; even then it is better to use your voice where possible.

Ropes for skipping games

Many people comment on the beautiful ropes that I use with the children. They are reasonably heavy, woven, soft and silky. I get them from boating suppliers who are very helpful (and rather amused when I tell them what I want them for). They usually have a huge range of ropes to choose from in any length you want. They are often very much cheaper than the ropes bought from a shop. Lovely wooden handles can be carved with the help of the children.

Wooden Staffs

There are many games that can be played using wooden staffs or rods (e.g. *Bird in a Cage*). These should be approximately 3'6" long (about waist high on an adult) and about 3/4" in diameter (100 x 2cm). Broom handles can be used, although dowelling from timber yards is often better quality. I usually round the edges off by sanding them down and give them a lovely finish by oiling them with linseed oil every six months or so.

To make a silky rainbow string for string games *(Cats Cradle,* game 155)

It's good to have one string for each child. I use a very small amount of super-glue to glue the end together, so that there is no knot on the string; but if you tie a knot carefully and can get it flat and small enough, it should be O.K. I use Easter-egg dye to colour the strings in rainbow colours, but be careful of water-soluble dyes – try to prevent your children going home after a rainy day with rainbow-coloured trouser pockets! I use a non-toxic fixative to fix the dye. The string should be about 5 foot long (150cm) when it is not joined; if this sounds a lot it is because you need plenty of spare string when making the forms. The beauty of having rainbow-coloured strings is that it is easy to identify which part of the string to work with when you are making the shapes. Your strings will be universally admired and treasured by children and adults alike!

Beanbags

These can be made from any pulse or bean e.g. kidney beans, lentils etc. Just make sure the bags don't get damp or wet! If you ever plan on taking them out of the country make plastic-bead ones as bean-filled bags will be confiscated by the customs. The making of these bags can be a popular 'rainy day' activity. The standard size is about 3 x 2 inches wide, and about 1 inch deep (7.5 x 5 x 2.5cm). Alternatively you can buy one from a sports or toy store and copy the design. For the younger children I sometimes put a little 'tail' on the bag. You can do this by sowing on a 6-8 inch (15-20cm) piece of ribbon to one edge. This makes a lovely tail behind the bag when it is thrown, making the flight path of the bag more obvious. It also makes it much easier to catch.

If you are making juggling bags these can be quickly and easily done by filling a balloon with a small amount of grain, about 2-3 tablespoons. Then cut off the neck of a second balloon and put the first balloon which contains the grains, inside it. Repeat this step over and over until you've built up about five layers of rubber.

Each person will need to make at least three balls. Alternatively you can make a pyramid shaped juggling bag out of cloth, which is excellent for beginners. Each side of the pyramid has a base of 2 inches (5cm).

Marbles

There are many different types and sizes of marbles, each with their own character and value. In a marbles craze, certain colours and designs become much valued 'hard currency'.

Quoit or rubber ring

These are commonly available and cheap to buy. You might be lucky and find the lovely old hemp rope type, however most are now made from rubber. They usually measure around 6-8 inches across (15-20cm).

Floor mats

Most sports stores or catalogues have these thin gymnastic or judo tumbling-mats. They are not cheap but are worth the outlay; once acquired the children use them very frequently. They are available in many sizes. The most standard size is around 5ft x 3ft long (150 x 90cm) and about 1-2 inches thick (2.5-5.0 cm). Some have the added advantage of velcrosing together if you have more than one.

Drums and other percussion instruments

Many of the games in this book involve either music, singing or percussion sounds. Many games can also be adapted so that the element of listening or tension is created through the use of musical instruments.

Skittles

The best sort are the old fashioned wooden ones, but these are difficult to obtain. Most toy stores have plastic ones. The heavier the better. They usually stand around 10-12 inches high (25-30cm) and are shaped like an old fashioned Coca-Cola bottle with a smaller base. I have never really been successful in making these out of scrap wood but a friend has made me some beautiful ones on a wood-turning lathe. Alternatively you can use tin cans of various sizes that have had the sharp edges made safe.

Equipment for Water Games

Hoops

One of the most useful things to have are plastic hoops which float in the water. These can be simply made from bicycle inner tubes weighted with lead. Different weights will enable you to float the hoops at different heights between the surface of the water and the floor of the pool. These are great to use in obstacle courses and to make under-water treasure trails.

Goggles

To prevent chlorinated water irritating the eyes, a cheap pair of goggles for each child is useful.

Corks

Collect them in as many shapes and sizes as you can manage. The games these can be used for are endless.

Kick boards

These come in a wide variety of sizes. Some of the ones that the children particularly enjoy are the large ones, large enough to use as a mini raft.

Rubber bricks

These can be used as the final part of the obstacle course. The swimmer can be asked to bring one or more of these to the surface. They are usally whole or half brick size and are coated in rubber. They can be bought in most good sports stores. I have made them by finding a smooth brick and building up layers of car inner-tube rubber over them. Of course care must be taken when placing these heavy objects in the water; a swimmer should not be asked to carry more than she can easily cope with.

HOW MUCH TIME AT EACH AGE?

Prior to the age of seven, children's play arises naturally out of imitation. Of course, little singing and finger games are shown; but generally play is spontaneous and free. This needs to be valued and allowed for; which is why, in many European countries and in Waldorf schools around the world, formal classroom-based education does not begin until the age of seven.

After seven, more formalised education begins. What follows is a guide to the amount of time needed each week for movement activities within school. It does not include the break and lunch time games but, as fully discussed in Chapter 11, it is vital that the teacher be involved in catalysing playground games.

If at all possible, game/sport times should take place after lunch. In referring to a lesson, a 45 minute time-span is presumed.

For the seven to twelve year-old, it is important to begin each morning with rhythmically orientated movements – such as skipping, clapping, stamping, singing games. This usually lasts for around fifteen minutes. The seven and eight year-old should experience at least 30-40 minutes of games besides this morning-time rhythmical activity, every second day. For instance on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. If at all possible the movement teacher should be a part of these lessons, together with the class teacher.

At nine and ten years old the child should experience at least one gymnastics and two games lessons per week. The gymnastics should be playful and pictorially-imaginatively based.

At eleven the child needs a greater input of movement. Now there should be five movement lessons per week. Two of these can be taken as a double lesson. For the twelve year-old this can remain the same or can move back to four lessons per week. Two of these would be gymnastics, the other a double games lesson. The games played should prepare for sport but should not yet spill over into formalised sport.

At thirteen, two gymnastic lessons and two sports lessons should be taken. These can be double lessons in the case of sport, and usually singles in the case of gymnastics.

From fourteen to eighteen years old the arrangement of the lessons will depend on whether and how an outdoor education programme is structured. Some schools organise their outdoor programme on a camping, usually week-block basis. If this is the case at least two outdoor activities per year should be experienced. If this is done, the student should also take two gymnastic and one double sports lesson per week. If the outdoor education programme is run within school hours, an extra lesson needs to be added to the timetable so that one day per week a triple (135 minutes) lesson is made available. This is necessary to allow time for potential travel to and from the site. It may be necessary on special occasions to make arrangements to extend this and go into after-school hours the student can easily cope with.

Part One

Secrets of the Magic Garden

Activities and Games for the 3 - 7 year-old

Chapter 1
Age 3 - 6

Age 3 - 4

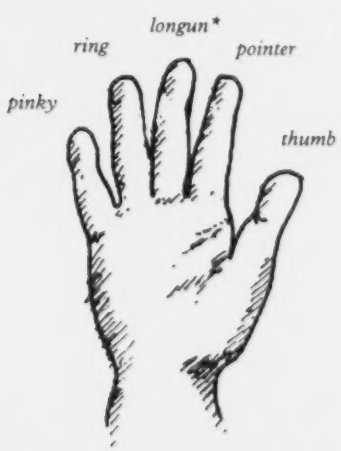
At this age, children need to begin to experience that they 'live in a body'. They can now perform tasks, particularly those that involve *imitating* adults and also other children. Games can be simple, and should be repeated over and over again. This helps build up security and resulting confidence. At this age children will seldom tire of a favorite game that is repeated often over many months. They enjoy games that have a clear beginning and an ending; such games can simply be movement to a verse or poem. In particular, it is important to focus on the fingers, toes, hands and feet at this age. Because children are so dreamy and unaware at this stage of their development, movements are kept close to the body and there are few free-running and chasing games that involve obstacles.

FINGER GAMES

Why do we play finger games with children?

Finger games enable the child to feel more present in his body. Not only do they help develop fine motor skills (finger games are a useful preparation for the skills needed in writing), but also encourage the child to focus his awareness on the part of the body (the fingers) that are most likely to experience the outside world through sensation. Child development shows that touch is one of the senses that is first explored and used; it is the sense which enables us to start experiencing ourselves as separate from the rest of the world. Here are a few examples of finger games.

The diagram below shows the names of the fingers, as used in the songs.



* slang

1. THE MICE IN MY HOUSE

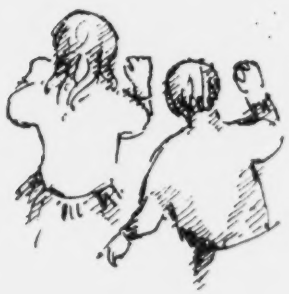
In our house so nice,

There are such awful mice

They hustle and bustle,

They rustle and tussle

On cupboards, and tables,



On windows and doors

They steal and they chew,

And if you're too slow

Whoosh! they're gone – one, two!

The house is an image that occurs very frequently in children's drawings and games. This may be interpreted as a picture of the child's relationship to his physical body. In the above game, the feet and toes are also incorporated – which is unusual, but highly beneficial.

As related by Sue Sim

2. THE TREE

Thousands of stars
Hundreds of growing leaves
(arms outstetched above head, fingers outstretched)
Tens of twigs
A few branches
(raise arms)
And one tree.
(stand upright, arms crossed, hands on shoulders)

The next game is one that can be acted out using the available space: but when 'me' is mentioned (standing in a puddle), the children must stand still.

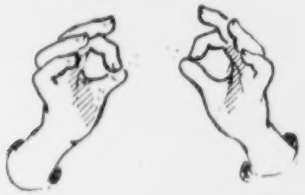
3. IN THE WATER

In the ocean, whales and sharks
In the lakes, eels
In the pond, ducks that dip
And in the puddle – . . . . . me!
(look down at feet)

4. GOLDEN RINGS

Each time an underlined word (or syllable) is spoken, a new ring is formed with the other hand.

I can make some golden rings
Golden rings, so fine and free.

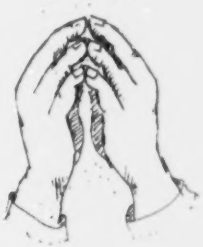


I can make a chain with them,
So that my love will marry me.

Written by Trevor Smith

5. BABIES WALK UP STAIRS

Begin with hands together, fingers pointing away from your body. Move a finger on each syllable of the verse.



Babies walk up stairs
(pinky) (ring) (longun)

One step at a time
(longun) (pointer) (thumb)

Boys and girls fly up and down
(pinky) (ring) (longun) (pointer) (thumb) (pointer) (longun)

As fast as light - ning can.
(ring) (pinky) (ring) (longun) (pointer) (thumb)

Old men often slip and slide
(pinky) (ring) (longun...cross...longun...cross)

On their way to bed
(longun) (pointer) (thumb)

Lad- ies step so light - ly
(pinky) (ring) (longun) (pointer) (thumb) (pointer)

You can hard - ly hear them tread.
(longun) (ring) (pinky) (ring) (longun) (pointer) (thumb)

Written by Trevor Smith

6. LITTLE MORRIS MEN

Hands together, fingers pointing upwards.

Two little Morris men,
(pointers move apart)
bow to the left,
(fingers 'bow' to each other, the left on the near-side)
bow to the right,
(they bow again, the right now on the near-side)
and clap their hands.
(pointers touch together)
Four little morris men ...
(pointers and longuns)
Six little morris men ...
(pointers, longuns and ring)
Eight little morris men ...
(pointers, longuns, ring and pinky)

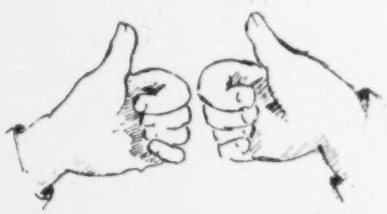
Use other combinations eg. longuns and ring fingers, pinkies and pointers ....

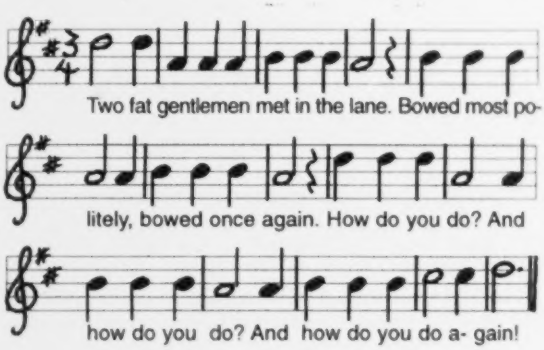
7. TWO FAT GENTLEMEN

Move each finger in turn. Start with thumb.

Two fat gentlemen / thin ladies / tall policemen
(thumb) (pointer) (longun)
/ farm workers / small babies
(ring) (pinky)

Met in the lane
Bowed most politely
Bowed once again.
How do you do?
And how do you do?
And how do you do? again!





8. IPSEY-WIPSEY SPIDER

Many people will know this traditional finger game. If you don't, persevere with the directions and try to work it out. It is a little difficult at first but perhaps this is why it is an enduring favourite with the children. They have such a sense of achievement when they have managed it.

Ipsey-wipsey spid-er climbed the water spout
Down came the rain and washed the spider out
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain
So Ipsey-wipsey spider climbed up the spout again.

Ipsey-
(the right pointer finger is placed on the left thumb)

wipsey
(the right thumb is moved up, and placed on the left pointer – this will cause the right pointer touching the left thumb to swivel; don't lose contact with the original right pointer and left thumb; you have now made a box shape with your fingers)

spid-er
(now take your right pointer away from your left thumb, move it away from you, keeping it under and then over your left pointer; swivel your right thumb on your left pointer as you make this circular motion; place your long finger of your right hand on your left thumb, keeping your right long finger on your left thumb rotate your left hand away from you, releasing the contact between your right thumb and left pointer)

climbed the water spout
(now you have got the action keep repeating it but use the ring fingers and the little fingers of each hand to touch the thumb of the opposite hand; the word 'spout' should coincide with the last little finger touching the opposite thumb)

Down came the rain and washed the spider out
(both hands are raised above the head; as the line is said, the hands move slowly down in front of you until they are resting at your side [if you are standing up, you can continue the motion until the hands touch the floor] the fingers should rapidly make small movements up and down to simulate rain falling)

Out came the sun and dried up all the rain
(one hand is placed over the other in front of your chest: as the line is said, the hands rise up above the head and reach out high above and wide apart, finally coming to rest at your side to make a big circle to represent the sun)

So Ipsey-wipsey spider climbed up the spout again.
(repeat the first action beginning with the right pointer finger touching the left thumb and so on)

9. HERE IS A BALL FOR JIMMY *

* Use child's own name.

Here is a ball for Jimmy
Big and soft and round.

(on the child's name, make a 'ball' with cupped hands)
Here is Jimmy's hammer
See how it can pound.

(make hammer with one fist, hitting the other one)
Here is Jimmy's music *(clap hands)*
Clapping, clapping, so

Here are Jimmy's soldiers
Standing in a row *(hold fingers up straight)*

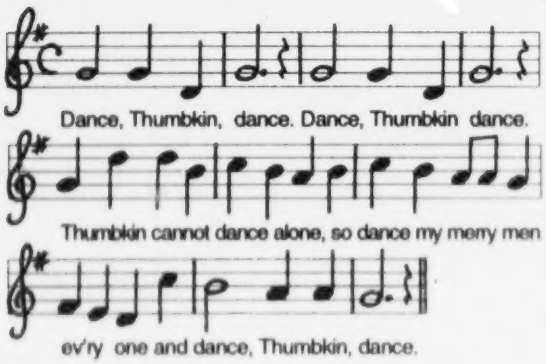
Here is Jimmy's trumpet
(put two fists in front of mouth)
Toot-toot-toot, toot-toot.

Here is the way that Jimmy
Plays hide-and-seek
(put hands over eyes and take them away)

Here is Jimmy's umbrella
To keep Jimmy dry *(hold hands over head)*

And here is Jimmy's little bed
Rock-a-rock-a-bye.
(fold arms together and rock them)

10. THUMBKIN, DANCE


Dance, Thumbkin, dance. Dance, Thumbkin dance.
Thumbkin cannot dance alone, so dance my merry men
ev'ry one and dance, Thumbkin, dance.

Dance POINTER dance ...
Dance LONG-UN dance ...
Dance RINGER dance ...
Dance PINKY dance ...

Dance, all men dance; dance, all men dance
All men now can dance again,
So dance my merry men everyone,
And dance, all men dance.

11. THE FLYING HANDS

Open them, shut them
Open them, shut them
Give a little clap!
Open them, shut them,
Open them, shut them,
Lay them in your lap.
Creep them, creep them,
Way up to your chin.
Open your little mouth,
But do not let them in!
Open them, shut them,
Open them, shut them.
To your shoulders fly.
Then like little birdies,
Let them flutter to the sky.
Falling, falling, falling,
Almost to the ground.
Quickly pick them up again
And turn them round and round.
Faster, faster, faster, faster,
Slower, slower, slower, slower,
Clap!

12. WEE WILLIE WORM (by Simon Burton)

Wee Willie Worm
(wriggle fingers of both hands.)

Began to squirm

When he saw, flying high
(cross hands and make bird wings)

Billy Bird in the sky.

Billy Bird flew down
(hands together swoop down from right to left, left to right)

And down and
down.

And Wee Willie Worm

Slid back underground.
(one fist surrounds other thumb, thumb slides into palm of hand)

13. THIS LITTLE FINGER

1, 2, 3, 4, 5,
(count on fingers)

Catching fishes all alive
(wriggle hand like a fish)

6, 7, 8, 9, 10
(count fingers of other hand)

Now I've let them go again.
(pretending to throw fish back)

Why did you let them go?
Because they bit my finger so.
(shake hand violently)

Which finger did they bite?
This little finger on the right.
(hold up little finger of right hand)

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14. GRANDMA AND GRANDPA

(translated from Hebrew)

Grandma Sarah and Grandpa Iven
(hands made into fists, thumbs up – one is Grandma, one is Grandpa)

Sat for a while in their garden
Grandma Sarah was knitting a sock
(knit with the thumbs)

Grandpa Iven was having a rock
(rock the thumbs)

'Grandma, when will you stop knitting
It is late and chilly for sitting'
(Grandpa thumb wriggles as he speaks)

Grandma is cross and hides away
(Grandma thumb hides in the middle of the fist)

Grandpa is cross and he
hides as well.
(Grandpa hides away)

Grandma peeps,
(Grandma peeps out between pointer and longun, then goes back)

Grandpa peeps
(Grandpa peeps out between pointer and longun, then goes back)

Grandma peeps,
(repeat actions)

Grandpa peeps
Grandma peeps,
(peeps out, and stays out)

Grandpa peeps
(peeps out, and stays out)

They hug and they kiss
(hook thumbs together, touch together)

And go home together in peace.
(they 'walk' home together)

As related by Aura Finn

CIRCLE GAMES

15. SALLY GO ROUND THE SUN

(for a whole circle of children)

Sally go round the sun
(the circle moves to the right)
Sally go round the moon
(the circle moves to the left)
Sally go round the chimney-pot
(again to the right)
on a Saturday afternoon
Whoops!
(the children move towards the centre of the circle)

16. ALL MY LITTLE DUCKS

All my little ducks are swimming in the mere
(in a circle, the children face one direction: they walk around moving their arms as if swimming)

Swimming in the mere,
Their heads are in the water,
(bend forward, heads down and arms swing backwards)

Their tails are in the air,
Their tails are in the air.

All my little ducks are swimming in the mere,
swimming in the mere, Their heads are in the
water, their tails are in the air, their tails are in the air.

17. SEE THE LITTLE HARE

This circle game could be used around Easter time. One child is chosen to be the hare. He crouches down in the centre of the circle.

See the little hare,
So fast asleep, fast asleep.
Little hare, oh are you ill
That you lie so quiet and still?
Hop, little hare, hop, anywhere.
(he jumps up and touches one of the children, who becomes the new hare)

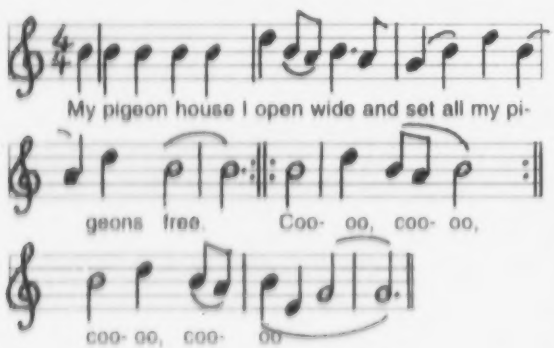
18. MY PIGEON HOUSE

Half the children make a circle, the other half are the pigeons, and crouch down in the centre.

My pigeon house I open wide
And set all my pigeons free
(the children in the circle raise their arms and the pigeons fly outside)
Coo-oo, coo-oo, coo-oo, coo-oo.

They fly around on every side,
Up to the highest tree
(the pigeons fly around the outside of the circle)
Coo-oo, coo-oo, coo-oo, coo-oo.

Then they come back at evening
And close their eyes and sing
(the pigeons return under the arms of the circle, which are then lowered)
Coo-oo, coo-oo, coo-oo, coo-oo.



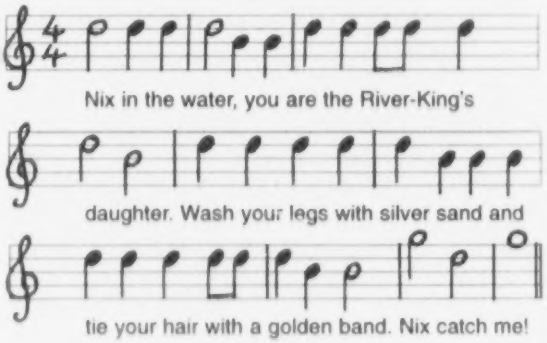
Age 4 - 5

The following games are for 4 - 5 year olds: but be careful, at this age, about singling any child out. Instead of one solitary soul, you can easily have two or even three children to represent the 'River-King's Daughter' or other 'character' in the centre of the circle.

19. NIX IN THE WATER

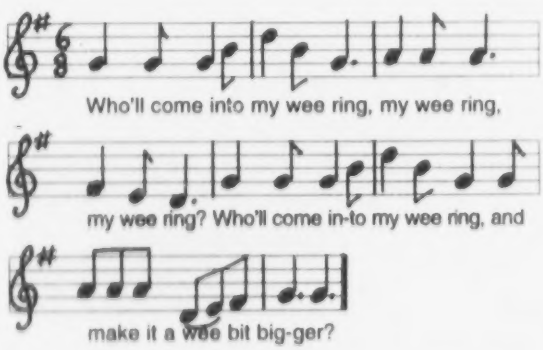
Two or three children are the nixes. They are in the centre of the circle.

Nix in the water,
You are the River-King's daughter,
Wash your legs with silver sand
And tie your hair with a golden band
(the children in the circle mime washing their legs and tying a ribbon in their hair)
Nix catch me!
(each nix goes to a child in the circle and puts his arms around them: these children are the new nixes)


Nix in the water, you are the River-King's
daughter. Wash your legs with silver sand and
tie your hair with a golden band. Nix catch me!

20. WHO'LL COME INTO MY WEE RING?

Three or four children form a circle. They dance around and around while Verse 1 – 'Who'll come into my wee ring?' – is sung. The other children wait in a line.



2) I'll come into your wee ring,
And make it bigger.

Two or three children from the front of the line join the circle. The game continues until all the children are in the circle.

21. THE WASHERWOMAN

We watch one little foot
(put right foot into circle)

And we watch one little shoe
(put left foot into circle)

And see what the busy washerwomen do.
They're washing, they're washing,
(mime the action)

They're washing all day through.
They're washing,
They're washing all day through.

2) We watch one little foot,
And we watch one little shoe,
And see what the busy washerwomen do.
They're rinsing … all day through.

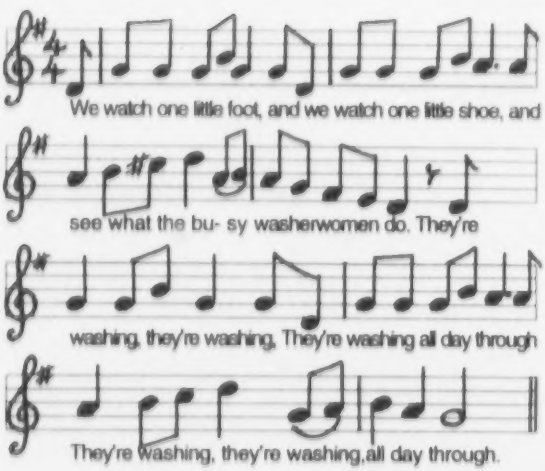
3) They're wringing …

4) They're drying …

5) They're ironing …

6) They're resting …

7) They're dancing …

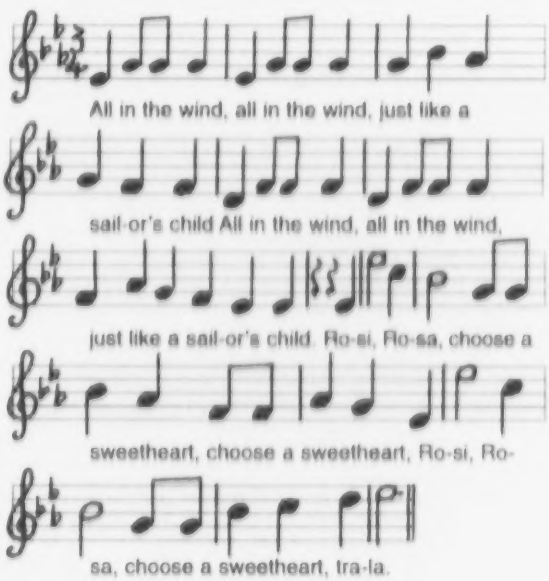

We watch one little foot, and we watch one little shoe, and
see what the bu- sy washerwomen do. They're
washing, they're washing, They're washing all day through
They're washing, they're washing,all day through.

22. ALL IN THE WIND

Two or three children are chosen. They move around inside the circle as the song is sung, as if trying to make up their minds whom to chose.

All in the wind, all in the wind,
Just like a sailor's child
All in the wind, all in the wind,
Just like a sailor's child.

Rosi, Rosa, choose a sweetheart
(the inside children choose a partner and stand in front of him)
Choose a sweetheart, choose a sweetheart,
(they bow to each other and then hold hands and dance round and round)
Rosi, Rosa, choose a sweetheart, tra-la.


All in the wind, all in the wind, just like a
sail-or's child All in the wind, all in the wind,
just like a sail-or's child. Ro-si, Ro-sa, choose a
sweetheart, choose a sweetheart, Ro-si, Ro-
sa, choose a sweetheart, tra-la.

23. KLING, KLANG GLORIA

The children stand in a circle, holding hands. They are the stones of the tower. One child is the princess in the tower – she stands in the centre of the circle. Another child is the prince – he walks around the outside of the circle as the song is sung.

The song and the actions are repeated until the prince has broken all the stones away, and the princess is freed.

Kling, klang, gloria
Rossel, rossel, filia
Who's sitting in the tower?
Fair maiden of the flower
To her I want to go
(the circle moves in towards the princess)

No, no, no.
She cannot see the light of day
Until he breaks the stones away
First stone
(the prince touches one of the children in the circle on the shoulder; this child holds the prince's hand and forms the beginning of a chain; the children in the circle close the gap)

Second stone
(the prince touches a second child on the shoulder, who then holds the hand of the last person in the chain)

Third stone
(the same again)

You'll come with me home.
(the circle moves away from the princess again)

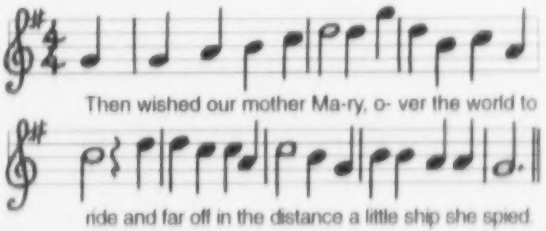
Kling, klang, glo-ri-a Rossel, rossel, fi-li-a Who's
sitting in this tower? Fair maiden of the flower To
her I want to go No, no, no. She cannot see the
light of day Until he breaks the stones away
First stone, second stone, third stone, you'll go
with me home.

The next game is one that should be played around Christmas time.

24. THEN WISHED OUR MOTHER MARY

Equipment: As many children as possible have bells hanging around their necks.

Two or three children act as Mary. They walk round anti-clockwise outside the circle, which is moving the other way.



2) Oh little ship, I pray thee
Come take me from this strand.
Take me and bear me with thee
To Heaven's golden land.

The circle stands still. Mary knocks on the door of the ship (the children's hands), and it opens (they lift their arms). Then Mary goes and stands in the centre of the circle.

3) And when our mother Mary
Went forth a-journeying
The bells of all the world
Began to ring and ring.

The children in the circle stand with legs a little apart; they rock from side to side.

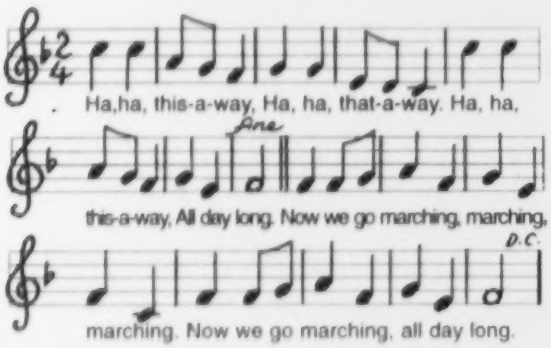
4) They rang, they rang so brightly,
They rang so bright and clear.
They rang our mother Mary
Into the heavenly sphere.

The children drop hands and walk in a line behind Mary, ringing their bells.

The next set of games are helpful in developing the children's awareness of their bodies, and their co-ordination.

25. HA, HA, THIS-A-WAY

Decide upon a certain movement for the first part of the song. Do the same every time it repeats. In the second part of the song, do actions like marching, walking, skipping, hopping etc.

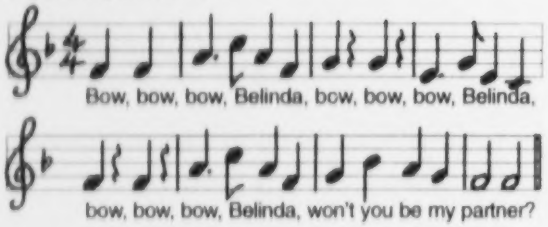

Ha,ha, this-a-way, Ha, ha, that-a-way. Ha, ha,
fine
this-a-way, All day long. Now we go marching, marching,
D.C.
marching. Now we go marching, all day long.

26. HEAD AND SHOULDERS

The children stand in a circle and touch the parts of the body mentioned in the song. Gradually increase the pace of the song, so that it is sung faster and faster.

Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes,
knees and toes, head and shoulders, knees and toes,
eyes, ears, mouth and nose.

27. BOW, BELINDA



2) Right hand out, Belinda, oh Belinda
Right hand out, oh Belinda
Right hand out and shake, shake, shake

3) Left hand out ...

4) Both hands out ...

Age 5 - 6

The next few games are for children aged 5 - 6. Now you can gradually move towards singling one child out of the group (e.g. to be the May-queen.)

28. ROSY APPLE, MELLOW PEAR

The children stand in a circle, holding hands. They lift their arms and form archways. The bridegroom stands in the centre of the circle.

The bridegroom chooses a bride, and leads her through the arches while the rest of Verse 2 is sung. Then another bridegroom is chosen.

2) Take her by the lily-white hand
Lead her 'cross the water
Give her kisses one, two, three,
She's a lady's daughter.

29. I WROTE A LETTER TO MY LOVE

Equipment: A beanbag or
a handkerchief or
a veil

The children sit on the floor in a circle. One child has the handkerchief, and walks behind the others while the song is sung. He drops the handkerchief or beanbag behind another child. This child gets up, picks up the bean bag and chases the first child round the circle. When the first child reaches the empty place in the circle he sits down safely. Then the second child is allowed to choose another person to chase him, by once more dropping the 'letter' behind another's back.

I wrote a letter to my love and on the way I dropped it
Someone must have picked it up and put it in their
pocket. I dropped it, I dropped it, put it in their pocket.

This game is good to play with children who are nearing their seventh birthday, as it provides a wakening moment (when the 'letter' is dropped behind the child's back). If you observe the children, you will soon see that some are more sleepy than others, that they really have to stay awake to meet the challenge of having to get up and chase the other child.

This game also helps children become more aware of the space behind them; it helps give them a sense that there is a distinct difference between the space that is before them (seen with the eyes) and the space that lies behind them.

In a workshop discussion a teacher recently told me that she had played this game with her kindergarten class – but that one boy had run away from the circle's periphery, and had run into the classroom, slamming the door behind him! This image raised a laugh! I asked her how old the child was, and she told me that he was only 4 years old. This can show us how important it is for games to be played at the right age. That is not to say that a similar situation won't arise with 6 or 7 year olds – if it does, I would 'fine-tune' the game: either by modifying the rule about running round the outside of the circle (the children can weave in and out of the others, for instance,) or use the 'portable gym' – a rope boundary, forming a 'house' about 3 metres away from the circle.

30. IN AND OUT THE WINDOWS

One child is on the outside of the circle. He is the prince (or princess). During Verse 1 he runs round the outside of the circle.

2) In and out the windows,
In and out the windows,
In and out the windows,
As we have done before.

Now the children in the circle raise their arms so that the prince can run 'in and out the windows'.

3) Stand and face your true love ...
As we have done before.

The prince now stands still in the centre of the circle, while the others move round him in a ring.

4) Carry him off to London ...
As we have done before.

Now the prince chooses a true love. The children in the circle raise their arms. The true love chases the prince in and out the arches. Then the true love becomes the next princess (or prince).

The next circle game is well suited to the days before Christmas.

31. SOFTLY, SOFTLY

The children stand in a circle. They are the houses in a village. One child is a traveller: he walks around the outside of the circle, anti-clockwise.

Softly, softly through the darkness
Snow is falling, swiftly, swiftly
All about the winds are blowing.
(stand still, let go hands: turn on the spot)

Open up the door I pray -
(arms held in an 'O' in front of the body: traveller knocks on a 'house')

'Tis so dark and cold, the way.
(traveller stands in the 'O' of the house)

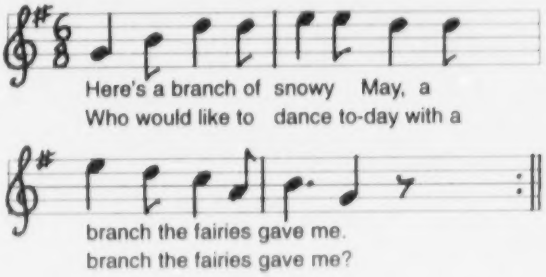
Clearly, clearly up above
(the circle moves around the traveller and his house, each child ringing an imaginary bell in the air)

The bells are calling,
Brightly, brightly deep within
A star is glowing.

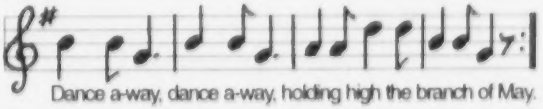
Softly, softly through the darkness Snow is fal-
ling, swiftly, swiftly All about the winds are
blowing. O - pen up the door I pray
'Tis so dark and cold, the way.
Clearly, clearly up above The bells are cal-
ling, Brightly, brightly deep within a star is glowing.

32. HERE'S A BRANCH OF SNOWY MAY

A May-King and a May-Queen are chosen. They are in the centre of the circle. (They can wear a paper May-crown on their heads and a branch of May or Queen Anne's lace in their hands.)



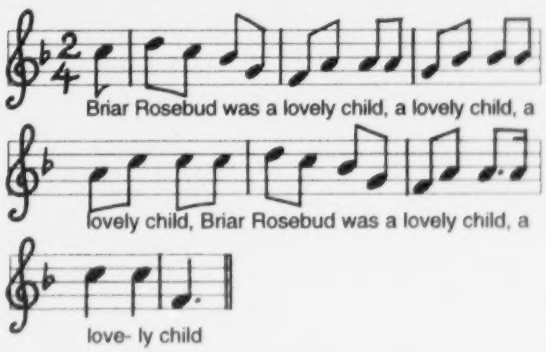
Chorus



When the chorus is sung, the May-Queen and May-King choose a partner each, and dance with them while the others sing and clap. The partners are the new King and Queen.

33. BRIAR-ROSEBUD

One child is Briar-Rosebud. She stands in the middle of the circle. Other children are chosen to be the wicked fairy, the good fairy and the prince: they stand on the outside of the circle. For Verses 1 and 2, the children dance around Briar-Rosebud, singing.



2) Briar Rosebud, please take care

3) And lo, a wicked fairy came
(the wicked fairy enters the ring)

4) Briar-rose shall die for evermore
(the wicked fairy sings this on her own)

5) And lo there came a fairy good
(the good fairy enters the circle)

6) Briar-rose shall sleep a hundred years
(the good fairy sings this on her own)

7) A thorny hedge grew high, so high

8) A noble prince came riding by

9) He took his sword and cut it down
(the prince enters into the ring)

10) Briar-Rosebud wake and rise again
(the prince sings this on his own)

11) All folk together dance and sing.
(the prince and princess join the others in the dance)

34. SEE A SHEPHERD MAIDEN

One child is the shepherd maiden: she is in the centre of the circle, which moves around her in a clockwise direction. One child is the leader of the sheep.

See a shepherd maiden here
Standing with her sheep so near,
With a partner she will make *(she chooses a partner)*
For her sheep a little gate.
(they make a gate by raising their arms in the centre of the circle)

Running quickly, they will pass
(the leader of the sheep leads the others under and through the gate)
To the upland meadow grass
Where the pasture is the best.
Till the sun sets in the West.

Shepherd maiden call them home
(the sheep reform the circle)
Day is done. No more they'll roam.
Safe within the guarded fold,
Shelter them from harm and cold.

The partner becomes the new shepherd maiden.

See a little maiden here standing
With a partner she will make for her
with her sheep so near, Running
sheep, a little gate. Shepherd
quickly, they will pass to the upland meadow
maiden call them home: day is done. No more they'll
grass where the pasture is the best :till the
roam. safe with- in the guarded fold, shelter
sun sets in the West.
them from harm and cold.

35. SALLY SALLY WATER

One child is Sally. She crouches down in the centre of the circle.

Sally, Sally, water sprinkle in the pan.
Rise, Sally, rise for a young man.
(Sally gets up)

Fly to the East and fly to the West,
Fly to the very one that loves you best.
(Sally chooses a partner)

Now you're married, wish you joy:
(they dance together inside the circle)
First a girl and then a boy.

Loving each other like sister and brother,
We hope to see them kiss each other.
(the partner becomes the new Sally)

Sally, Sally, water sprinkle in the pan. Rise, Sally, ri-se
for a young man. Fly to the East and fly to the West,
Fly to the very one that loves you best.
Now you're married, wish you joy: first a girl and
then a boy. Loving each other like sister and brother, we
hope to see them kiss each other.

36. HOW DOES THE FARMER

The children hold hands in a circle, and move round while singing the song.

Have you ev-er seen the farmer, have you
ever seen the farmer, have you ever seen the
farmer sow his barley and wheat? This is
how I saw the farmer, this is how I saw the
farmer, this is how I saw the farmer, sow his
barley and wheat.

Have you ever seen the farmer,
Have you ever seen the farmer,
Have you ever seen the farmer
Sow his barley and wheat?
This is how I saw the farmer,
(stand and mime actions)
This is how I saw the farmer,
This is how I saw the farmer,
Sow his barley and wheat.

2) Have you ever seen the farmer
Reap his barley and his wheat?

3) Thresh ...

4) Sift ...

5) When the harvest is o'er?

37. I AM THE MUSIC MAN

The children walk around in a circle, clockwise. One child is the music-man. He walks inside the ring in the opposite direction.

I am the music-man and I come from fairyland
And I can play,

What can you play?
I can play the violin, the violin, the violin,
(the circle stands still: the music-man mimes the action)

I can play the violin, vio- violin.
We can play the violin, the violin, the violin,
(all mime the action)

We can play the violin, the vio-violin.

2) The piano

3) The silv'ry flute

4) The trumpet

5) The big drums

I am the music man and I come from fairy-
land, And I can play - What can you play?
I can play the vi-o-lin, the vio-lin, the vio-lin,
I can play the vio- lin, the vio- vio- lin.

38. I TRAVELLED OVER LAND AND SEA

The children stand in a circle. They move round in the circle while doing the different actions of the verses.

I travelled over land and sea, I met a man who
said to me, An old old man who said to me 'Pray
where do you be- long to?' 'Oh, I belong to
Marching land, to Marching land to Marching land, And
ev'ryone who can march like me, Why!
he belongs to Marching land.'

2) Clapping land

3) Hopping land

4) Skipping land

5) Nodding land

39. PUNCHINELLO

One child stands in the centre of the circle: he is Punchinello. The circle moves around him.

Look who comes here! Why, it's Mister Punchin-
ell - o. Dear Pun - chi - nello is back again in
town. Where have you been? We've
missed you Punchin - el - lo. Here, there, and
elsewhere, wand'ring up and down

2) Play for us now, we are ready, Punchinello
Play for us now, we all like to watch your fun.
(Punchinello does something funny; the circle imitates him)
Tra la la la la, tra la la la la la la
Tra la la la, tra la la la la la.
(Punchinello chooses another child to be the new Punchinello, then rejoins circle)

Chapter 2
Age 6 - 7

40. WHO'S UNDER THE BLANKET? (Farmer's Seed)

Equipment: A large blanket

This is a very simple game that is a favourite of the five- to seven-year olds.

The children sit in a circle. A farmer is chosen and goes outside the door and waits to be called in, after being given a moment to take note of all the other children who are sitting in the circle. A 'seed' is chosen from amongst those remaining. This child hides under a blanket lying in the middle of the circle. The farmer is called back in while the children say:

> A little seed in the ground,
> Along a farmer came.
> It comes into the sunshine,
> When he calls its name.

The farmer must guess who has left the circle and is now hiding under the blanket. If she guesses rightly, a different farmer is chosen who briefly leaves the room while another seed is chosen, and the game begins again. If she cannot guess, some hints may be given; for instance, colour of hair, or whether the hidden child is tall or small.

Athough the form of this game could hardly be simpler, it calls upon the power of observation. Until this age, children feel at one with their environment and do not seem to notice details with anything like the clarity of 7-8 year olds. This game challenges them to gently awaken to the world around them.

As related by Alison Brooking-Payne

41. GRANDMA'S SLIPPER

Equipment: slipper or shoe for Grandpa/Grandma

One child is chosen to be Grandma (or Grandpa). She stands at one end of the play area, with her back to the others, and her slipper on the ground behind her (closest to the other players). The other children try to steal Grandma's shoe, without being caught out.

Grandma starts the game by calling out **'Grandma, Grandma! Grab my shoe!'** Then she quickly turns round and looks to see if anyone is still moving. The others are allowed to move towards Grandma when she is speaking, but must stand as still as statues when she turns round. If Grandma sees anyone moving, all the children must return to where the last child is standing, before moving forward again.

When a child has got to Grandma's slipper, she picks it up, and runs back to the far end of the area.

Grandma chases the children and tries to tag them. Then the game has ended, and another Grandma or Grandpa is chosen.

Variations

* Only the person who Grandma sees moving is sent back to the starting line.
* When the slipper is stolen, Grandma tries to tag the person with the slipper.
* When the slipper is stolen, the children try to sneak it back across the starting line. They retreat backwards in the same way (moving only when Grandma's back is turned), but now they pass the slipper behind their backs from player to player. Grandma is allowed 1 - 3 guesses to find who has the shoe; and still sends children back to the starting line if she sees them move. (An extra guess can be awarded to Grandma every time she sees someone move.) If the children get the shoe across the starting line without Grandma guessing where it is, they win; and the game begins again.

Grandma's Slipper

Other versions

42. MR WOLF

Instead of Grandma and her slipper, Mr Wolf stands with his back to the others. They begin by saying, **'What's the time, Mr Wolf?'** He calls out a time, e.g. **'Six o'clock!',** then turns to see if anyone is moving. This is repeated until quite a few children are close to him, then Mr Wolf answers **'Supper-time!',** upon which he turns and chases the children to the starting line.

43. K.I.N.G.

Instead of Mr Wolf, the King stands at one end of the play area. He says, **'K.I.N.G. spells king!'**, at which he turns around to check if anyone is moving, then turns his back again. When the first player touches the king, he chases them back to the starting line.

These games help children become more aware of moving their bodies; by trying to *stop* moving, they learn control over their limbs. *Grandma's Slipper* is also a game that gives children the opportunity to face the consequences of their own natures. For instance, I have seen a sanguine child constantly move forward too eagerly – only to be sent back time and time again. Phlegmatic and melancholic children, on the other hand, tend to move so gradually that they are never caught by Grandma – but they also never get the chance to grab the slipper: they tend to miss out on the fun. Sending all the children back to where the cautious melancholic is standing, gives value to her – as well as giving her a chance to move forward once more with the vanguard! The melancholic who often feels left out of games can, through this rule, become the 'saviour' of the group and may even receive congratulations from some of the other players who normally either ignore her or make her uncomfortable with their comments.

The last variation is also very popular. Smuggling the shoe back to the starting line is an image of how authorities can be tricked – and the children love this! At this age children are also fascinated with magic – and when the slipper is revealed behind the starting line, there is a definite moment of surprise for Grandma: it is as if it has happened by magic!

44. MOTHER MAY I?

The children stand in a large circle around one person who is the mother (or father). By asking questions, and taking different kinds of steps, the children in the circle approach the mother. When one child is close enough to touch her, the mother chases the children back to the line of the original circle. If she catches one, this child then becomes the mother or father.

For instance:

Sarah: Mother may we take 3 giant steps forwards?

Mother: No. But you can take 2 baby steps forwards.

(the whole circle advances by 2 baby steps)

Mother: You.

(choosing another child to ask the question)

Tom: Mother, may we take 10 scissor steps forwards?

Mother: No, but ...

Pigeon-toed children and those whose feet face outwards (duck-footed) need help in aligning themselves as well as their feet! For example, the children whose feet turn outwards will tend to throw themselves into things, and have little sense of backspace. The pigeon-toed child may be more enclosed and in extreme cases will have difficulty in relating to the world or the people around her.

This game can help children when they go on holiday and need to bargain the price of that souvenir they want to buy! Seriously, bargaining is part of our social milieu and this game gives kids a chance to explore and exercise their bargaining skills.

It is also a very old game; it uses the archetypal picture of the mother or father as a creative authority. For children at this age, the parents are still 'wise and all-knowing' – and this changes soon (usually at age 9 or 10). If you observe children playing this game, you will see how they learn through imitation – the mannerisms and language of their parents are often depicted very accurately!

SUGGESTIONS FOR STEPS:

Pigeon steps

Duck steps

Baby crawls

Star jumps

Giant steps

Baby steps

Froggy jumps

Spin jumps

1-legged hops

Double scissors

2-legged hops
(bunny/kangaroo)

CLAPPING GAMES

Too much in modern childhood is scattered and unpredictable. Change, fragmentation and disruption, whether in the smaller context of daily rhythms, such as bed and meal times, or in the wider influences of the environment, town and country in which children live, are nowadays constantly undermining their security. Life becomes uncertain. It is not insignificant that in seeking a feeling of security, children often turn to repetitive rhymes and games.

Without these types of activities, children could become emotionally dry, brittle, and nervous, unable to engage with others, and more importantly, unable to have flexible and healthy access to their feeling life. The capacity for rhythmic speech and movement sustains us in a way that goes far deeper than just communicating our basic needs.

There are hundreds of clapping games played in almost all cultures. In playgrounds all around the world children can be seen enjoying them. Hand-clapping, in sometimes complex patterns, is clearly a social activity that requires close cooperation with another person. Friendships and group-identity are shared by those who know a particular clapping game. Co-ordination skills are also wonderfully served in this activity.

The fact that these games are repeated over and over by the players, adds to the feeling of security that all rhythmical, predictable activity brings. Moving rhythmically to the spoken word is of great importance throughout childhood.

What follows is just a drop in the ocean of the hundreds of clapping games. The ones given here are intended only to stimulate your memory and imagination; some of the best clapping games are the ones that are made up by children themselves, with perhaps a little help from you.

45. A SAILOR WENT TO SEA

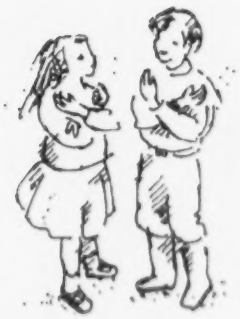
Children stand facing each other in pairs. (Cross shoulders means crossing arms across the chest so that the hands rest on the shoulders).

A sail - or went to sea, sea, sea
cross shoulders / clap / partner-clap /cross shoulders / clap / partner-clap x2

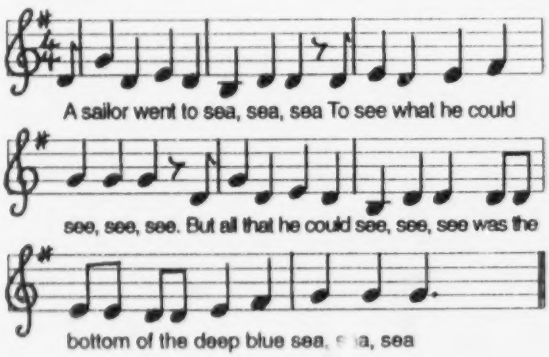
To see what he could see see see
cross shoulders / clap / partner-clap / cross shoulders / clap / partner-clap x 2

But all that he could see, see, see
cross shoulders / clap / partner-clap / cross shoulders / clap / partner-clap x 2

Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea
cross shoulders / clap / partner-clap / cross shoulders / clap / partner-clap x 2



cross shoulders


A sailor went to sea, sea, sea To see what he could
see, see, see. But all that he could see, see, see was the
bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea

clap

partner-clap

Other types:

head

shoulders

clap

cross shoulders

partner clap

hands cross knees

hands cross waist

single partner clap

cross-partner clap

palm-up palm-down

Make sure that children are clapping at shoulder height and don't go higher and higher with their hands. The cross-over movement of the hands in this game is especially helpful, yet difficult for children with certain learning difficulties; they may need some time and patience to achieve success with these more difficult movements. Once they have mastered them, though, they often become real enthusiasts.

46. MY MOTHER SAID

My mother said
head / shoulders / partner-clap

I never should
head / shoulders / partner-clap

Play with the fairies
head / shoulders / partner-clap

In the wood
head / shoulders / partner-clap

They dance with fire
head / shoulders / partner-clap

They roll in hay
head / shoulders / partner-clap

They'll steal your heart
head / shoulders / partner-clap

Right a - way.
head / shoulders / partner-clap

Variation 1
head / shoulders /clap / partner-clap

Variation 2
head / cross shoulders / clap / partner-clap

(Cross-partner means clapping first the left hand of your partner with your own left hand, then right hands. Palm-up palm-down means that first one partner lightly slaps the other's upturned palms, then vice versa.)

47. PIM POM PAY

In the following game with a partner, 'both' means partners clap both hands together, 'R' and 'L' mean clapping either right or left hands, and 'clap' means clapping your own hands together.

Pim pom pe / po lo ne / po lo nas - ki /
knees-clap-both / clap - R - clap/ L - clap - both - both/

pim pom pe - / po lo ne - /
knees-clap-both - clap/ R - clap - L - clap/

Ac a de mi so far ri / Aca de mi puff puff
knees-clap-both-clap-R-clap-L/ clap-knees-clap-both-both

The words *pe* and *ne* are pronounced *pay* and *nay*. I'm not aware of this being any language other than traditional nonsense language, such as children often use in rhymes, enjoying the nature of the sounds rather than intelligible words.

48. GOOSE DRANK WINE

In the following game, UR and UL (upturned right and left) and DR and DL (downturned right and left) are directions for one of the partners. The other obviously must do the opposite.

Three six, nine,
clap - UR - DR

the goose drank wine,
clap - UL - DL- clap

and the monkey chewed tobacco on the street car line.
UR - DR - clap - UL - DL - clap - both - both

The line it broke, the monkey got choked
Clap - UR - DR - clap -UL- DL - clap

and they all went to heaven in a little row boat.
UR - DR - clap - UL - DL - clap - both - both

This is another good example of children bringing the habits of the adults around them into a game. In this case they have integrated these pictures with often-used rhyme images of animals and the spiritual world.

49. CHICKEN POX

This is an easy pattern to pick up. It is repeated twice in every paragraph. Originally this game was called 'Scarlet Fever' but now that this is a rarity, the more common 'Chicken Pox' is substituted.

(clap-right-clap-left-clap-both-both)

I had the chicken pox, pox
I had it very bad, bad
They wrapped me in a blanket
And they threw me in a cab, cab.

The cab was very shaky,
I nearly tumbled out, out,
When I got to hospital,
You should have heard me shout, shout.

Mummy, daddy take me home,
From this convalescent home,
I've been here a week or two
Now I want to be with you.

Here comes Doctor Glannister,
Sliding down the banister,
Half way down he ripped his pants,
Doing the hula-hula dance.

Related by Michael Taylor

BEANBAG GAMES

I created the next game to prepare the children for the movements in the one after, *We move our hands*. It is intended to help increase spatial awareness, and encourage understanding of left and right, front and back, up and down. Make sure the children are good at this game before moving on to *We move our hands*. These games can be played in individual therapy situations or with a large group.

50. THERE WAS A LITTLE MOUSE ...

Equipment: one beanbag

'There was once a village in a far away land. In this village there were many houses, but the people of this country were poor, and did not have much food to eat. In the house near the church lived a little mouse, in a hole under the cupboard. Every night when all the men, women and children were sleeping, he would come out of his hole and look for food ...'

The children form the houses of the village, by sitting cross-legged in a circle on the floor.The beanbag is the 'mouse'. (When the children are familiar with the form of this game, you may wish to try it with them standing rather than sitting.)

The verse begins:

There was a little mouse, ran into a house.

With these words the child with the beanbag uses her left hand to make the 'mouse' go into the 'house' of the right hand, sliding the beanbag along the floor.

Ran in, ran out again

She passes the mouse to her right-hand neighbour with her right hand

Ran in, ran out, ran in, ran out,
ran in, ran out again

The next child repeats the action of passing the beanbag from left to right. After a while a variation is introduced:

There was a little mouse
that ran round a house

The child with the beanbag puts it into her right hand. Then passes the beanbag back into her left hand behind her back in the air, and again into her right hand in front of her body, and passes it on to her right-hand neighbour.

Ran round again.
Ran round and round,
round and round,
round and round again.

The child passes the beanbag around the waist, behind the back and front. The next child repeats the movement. This is continued until the teacher introduces the next variation.

There was a little mouse
ran over a house
ran over and,
ran under again.
Over and under,
over and under,
over and under again

The child passes the beanbag in a vertical circular motion while changing hands at both top and bottom in front of herself. The top of this circle would be near her head, the bottom near her waist.

There was a little mouse
ran on top of the house
and fell to the bottom
again.
To the top and bottom,
top and bottom,
top and bottom again

The child holds the beanbag slightly above and in front of her head with one hand, and drops it into the other hand which is below, at about waist level.

If you wanted to develop the game further you could adapt the more demanding movements described in *We move our hands* which is the next game outlined. Or you could make up some of your own.

To make this game more exciting, introduce a 'hungry black cat' (a soft ball). The ball is passed round the circle after the beanbag, using the same motions as the mouse. You can start off by having the cat opposite the mouse in the circle and see if by passing it quickly the cat can catch up with the mouse. You may have to simplify the movements as emphasis is now placed on speed.

Another variation which can be added to the cat chasing the mouse, or used in the simpler game first described, is to have an 'owl' flying around the circle. This owl is either yourself or a child. It is the owl's task to watch the path of the mouse carefully; if the mouse is dropped, then the owl quickly swoops down and eats it. In other words, one child is standing in the centre of the circle waiting for someone to drop a beanbag while they are performing one of the tasks set. If a beanbag is dropped, the child in the middle must quickly touch it; then the 'owl' changes place with the child who was in the circle holding the mouse. You can simplify this by dispensing with the rule that the owl has to touch the mouse; instead, anyone dropping a mouse has to become the new owl by changing places with the old owl who was previously in the centre of the circle. Once the change has been completed, the game begins again.

A variation that needs careful definition is a chasing version, which uses only one beanbag per group: if a mouse is dropped, the child that dropped it must quickly pick it up and try to escape from the owl who will give chase. The 'portable gymnasium' will need to be used, i.e. a large rope marking an external boundary beyond which the players are not allowed to go (see equipment). When the owl catches the child holding the mouse, they change places, and the old owl now holds the mouse and stands in the circle. The child that was caught becomes the new owl.

This game can be played standing up, but make sure the children have a good sense of the game and have enough self-discipline, otherwise it can end in a chaotic chasing game with the mouse disappearing over the horizon followed by the owl and all the other players!

It is a good idea to introduce this game using only one beanbag for the whole group; but as the children's ability and sense of form increases you can introduce another – perhaps even increasing to four or more, depending on the number of children.

51. WE MOVE OUR HANDS

Equipment: one beanbag per child (The number of beanbags needs to be gradually built up as the players get better.)

We move our hands through the air

Start with beanbag in right hand, palm up. Bring hands together on 'hands', so that the right hand gives the left hand the beanbag. Hands move apart, so that left hand has beanbag, and is palm-down, ready to place the beanbag in her neighbour's right hand (on the word 'air'). Her right hand receives another beanbag.

Like ripples in a river

Movements are repeated, so that the beanbag is exchanged on the underlined words.

Our hands are the giver
(The same)

Of all we need.
(The same)

Variations

Like a ....

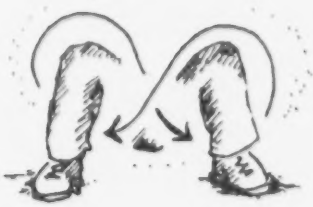
Whirlpool

Rainbow

Waterfall

Sleeper

Water bird



Weaver/London Bridge

Encouraging good posture can begin very early in childhood; I have found, for instance, that if children sit cross-legged on a small cushion, with their feet on the ground, they will sit straighter. They will also be able to 'weave' the mouse under and over their legs in this position.

I have also observed an increasing need in children for therapeutic movement – sometimes up to half or more of the children in a class are in need of extra help. I created the last game to use healing movements so that the whole group can benefit and have fun at the same time. This also means that individuals are not singled out, and that doing such movements, even if it is difficult, is therefore less threatening to them.

Like the previous game, the next one helps increase spatial awareness. The pattern of passing and receiving beanbags requires an awareness of left and right, up down, front and back. I once had a little boy in a group who had no awareness of his left side – which meant that he ended up with a great pile of beanbags in front of him, and the child on his left had nothing! Afterwards, I asked him to describe the room we were standing in. He was able to describe everything to the right of him in great detail, but was very vague about what was on his left. I then turned him round, and he did the same. To help him, the next time we did *We move our hands,* I asked him sit with his back to the centre of the circle, so that he then received with his left hand.

Other therapeutic movements are, for instance, letting the beanbag fall from the head – which requires a certain downward movement of the chin. This counteracts the primal reflex used by the baby to lift its head when lying on its stomach, but which, when it persists as a gesture in 6 or 7 year-olds, is not healthy and should be corrected, so that the head rests properly balanced on the spinal chord.

CHASING GAMES

Why play chasing games? *It is remarkable that chasing games are a universal phenomenon. What archetypal image are we working with here? Perhaps such games give outer expression to the nightmare of being chased by an unseen or seen enemy. This dream from the unconscious is then played out in the game – which in itself could be helpful. As a physical expression of an unconscious fear, a chasing game gives the child an opportunity to begin to overcome this fear.*

Outwitting the foe who is chasing by using clever, quick movements or tactics to reach safety, is a powerful reinforcement of our ability to have control and empower ourselves in times of danger. But let's look further ...

A great deal of 'spatial awareness' is required if we are either to catch or avoid being caught in these games. Through playful twisting and turning we learn to become aware of the space around us.

As children grow, their thinking capacity also develops in a continuum from dreaminess to abstraction. Chasing games help develop the capacity for perceiving and then acting. The development of individual ability to think becomes linked in a natural and positive way with the child's will.

This relationship between thinking and action happens in a very special way, one that is particularly apparent in chasing games. The child perceives the chaser drawing near, and runs away. What is the motivation to run? It could be danger, fear, pride at not being caught; what these all have in common is that they are feelings. The chasing game shows us how feelings mediate and communicate between the life of thinking and action. In so doing they also cultivate a harmony vital for life.

Orchard is a chasing game; but as well as being chased, you are also chasing another person. This brings a playful awareness of front and back space, and at the same time you must remember where you are placing your feet – otherwise you could easily trip over the roots of a pear tree! In order to do all of this at once, the children have to be in themselves – and be more conscious than in free chasing games, such as *Scarecrows* (see Chapter 5). The effort to remain conscious of all these things helps the child exercise an increased consciousness of the space that surrounds her.

52. ORCHARD

'There was once a farmer who owned a beautiful orchard. In this orchard were many trees bearing fruit, there were apple trees, pear trees, banana trees ... Now, the farmer was a lazy man, and didn't like to pick the fruit himself. So he waited instead until a big wind came, and then he would run into the orchard and try to gather as many of the fallen fruit as he could, without being hit on the head by a crisp apple or a heavy banana! But this farmer wasn't quick enough to gather all the fruit, so when he heard the north wind beginning to blow, he would decide which particular fruit to gather, to sell the following Saturday at the market.'

The children sit in a circle, with their legs straight out in front of them. They are fruit trees in an orchard, and their legs are the trees' roots. (Make sure that everyone's legs are together and are lying flat on the ground.)

Go round the circle, giving them different fruit names: e.g. pear, apple, banana. The teacher says: **'A big wind comes and blows all the... APPLES down!'**

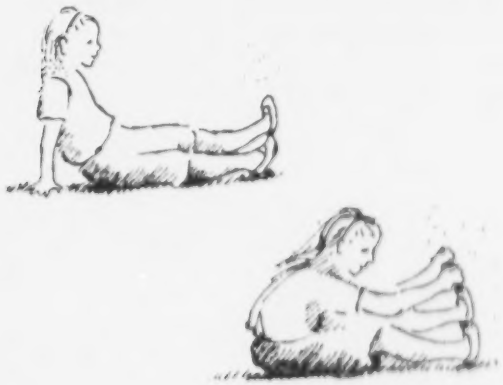
All those children who are apples have to get up and run once round inside the circle, stepping over the other children's outstretched legs. Each apple tries to catch the apple in front of her, but tries not to be caught from behind.

If an apple is caught, she quickly goes to the centre of the circle (the fruit bowl) until all the other apples have reached their places. Then she returns to her place.

The leader then begins the next round: **'The wind comes again and this time blows all the BANANAS off the trees!'** The game continues in this way.

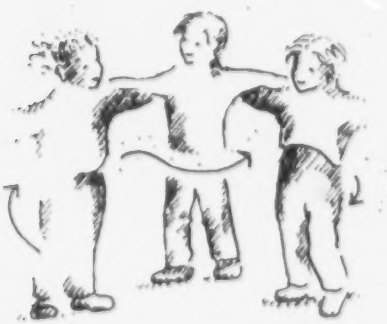
Variations

The farmer builds a fence around the orchard. (Children put one foot on top of the other, keeping their legs outstretched. For a higher fence, add hands.)



The farmer ploughs the ground in the orchard. (Children sit with their legs wide apart, and the running fruit have to step inside and then outside the circle.)

The trees in the orchard grow too close together. (Children rest their arms on each other's shoulders. The fruit runs under the arms, weaving round the circle.)



Some of the trees' branches are so heavy with fruit, that they touch the ground. (One child has her right arm on her right-hand neighbour's shoulder. She holds the hand of her left-hand neighbour. The next child has her left arm on her neighbour's shoulder, and her right hand holds her neighbour's hand. Again the fruit weaves in and out, but this time they have to slither beneath the low branches.)

The orchard is full of frogs who jump over the fence posts. (The children in the circle squat down, in a foetal position, and the fruit-frogs leap-frog over them.)

This is a game that helps children become more aware of where they place their feet when running. It helps increase consciousness about how we move. Like many games for younger children, it has a clear beginning (when the leader calls out the name of the fruit) and an end (when the fruit sit down). It is a game that works through pictures, and has an 'awakening' moment – the call.

COUNTING OUT RHYMES

Below are a number of counting rhymes – traditionally used to single out one member of a group. The children usually either stand in a line or a circle and one child will be designated the 'counter'. It will be her job to say the rhyme while counting along the line or circle of all the intended players. This is usually done either by pointing at, or touching, each player in time with the rhythm of the verse being spoken. When the last word of the rhyme is said, the person who is being pointed at by the 'counter' is the player who will adopt the prearranged task. It may be that this person becomes 'It'; or she may be the leader of a team; or will have the first turn in a game. Many of these verses include 'nonsense' words – which children at this age particularly delight in.

The best counting verses are the ones that are 'home-made'. Here are a few examples.

53. EENIE, MEENIE, MACKARACKA

Eenie, meenie, mackaracka
Hi, di dominacka
Stickeracka, roomeracka
Om, Pom, Push.

As related by Paul Mathews

54. WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL

When I was a little girl
I jumped up in a tree
There I found an elephant
As big as you and me.
Just as he spoke to me
Along came a bee
Tumble down, bumble down
Out goes thee!

Anne Hutchinson and Sue Sims

55. OG ADDLE UNDER FROG

Og addle under frog
Ping noodle in a sping
Lap riddle on a tap
Nork puddle
DONE!

Kate Hammond

56. CAPTAIN COOK

Captain Cook had a look,
All around Australia.
He lost his pants.
In the middle of France.
And found them in Tasmania.

Overheard from a group
of children in Australia

counter

STRING GAMES

Quiet your faces,
Be crossed every thumb;
Fix on me deep your eyes;
And with my strings a story shall come,
Old, and lovely, and wise.
Apologies to Walter de la Mare

String games, like clapping and skipping games, exist in almost all cultures. They range from the very basic to incredibly complex forms. Whole books have been dedicated to these games, the best of which are the 'Cats Cradle' series. You can obtain these at little expense from most bookshops. What they do not provide, however, are the stories that often accompany the teaching of a new string pattern.

String games have a particularly important role in the Pacific islands. Cultural identity and pictorial history is often portrayed in the telling of a story that weaves as the fingers do on the string. I have sat spellbound as mothers and grandmothers of these islands told their children such stories. What follows are some examples of how string games can be presented in their more traditional form. Children learn them more easily in this way, and retain the story or image when repeating the pattern. When teaching another child they will tell the story themselves, often making up new images as well.

Ask children to sit in pairs, side by side, facing the front. I explain the string games using the terms 'User' for the dominant hand (right if right-handed, left if left-handed), and 'Helper' for the other hand. Sometimes I turn my back to them and demonstrate the games above my head, so that the children don't have to 'translate' left to right etc. This, however, requires cerebral gymnastics as well as physical contortions! If you are not in training for the Cerebral Olympics, let the children sit behind and around you when you tell the story which explains the movements.

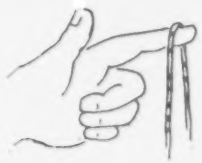
To start teaching string games I use this verse:

> Nimble fingers, nimble fingers
> What can they do?
> With a pointer, long-un, ring and pinky,
> Thumb and palm-a too.

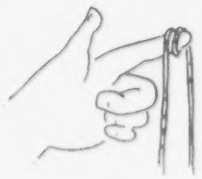
Here are some introductory string games especially for six year olds.

57. THE OWL

1. 'Once there was a willow tree. ...

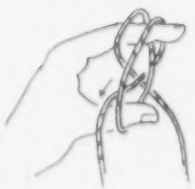


2 'An owl wrapped one claw around one branch ...'



3. '... and the other around the other ...'

4. '... then yawned ...'



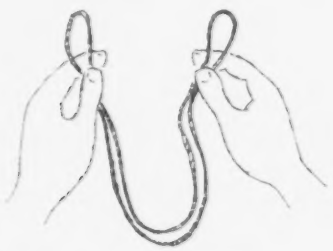
5. '... and folded one wing ...'

6. '... and then the other. Blinked three times: Whoo! Whoo! and went to sleep.'

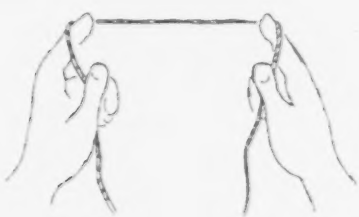
The Dragon and *The Necklace* are taken from the string story entitled *The Dragon, the Princess and Jack* by Michael Taylor

58. THE DRAGON

1. 'Here is the dragon. He is watching you carefully, and just because he wags his tail, it doesn't mean that he is friendly.'

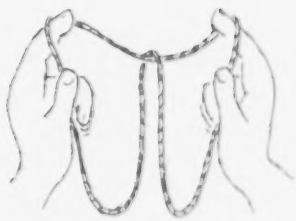


2. 'Don't go near his cave, you won't like what you find there! Don't go near his mouth.'

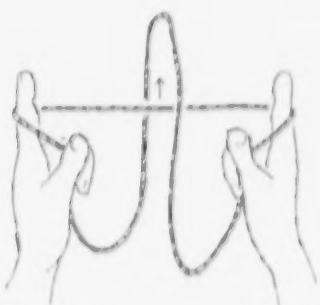


3. Place the right hand loop over the left index string, making a cross. Let go of the right hand. The two hanging loops from the left hand should be about equal in length. Take hold of the original left hand string with both hands on either side of the cross.

4. 'He might ...'



Bring hands slightly together, then apart, firmly holding the upmost string with your thumbs on your index fingers, thus straightening the string between your index fingers. This causes the dragon to 'spit fire'.

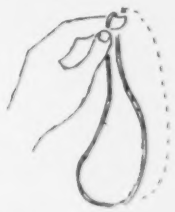


5. 'spit ..... fire .....
he might ..... spit ..... fire
he might ..... spit ..... fire! '

Game and story devised Michael Taylor

59. THE NECKLACE

1. 'Here in this golden tower,
Counting the hours,
Sits the princess
With the ring on her finger.'



2. 'Rings on her fingers,
Bells on her toes,
She shall have music,
Wherever she goes.
But she goes nowhere,
She just sits and stares,
And takes off and turns ...'

Take off and turn the string with the right hand, then replace the outermost ring.

'... The rings on her fingers.'

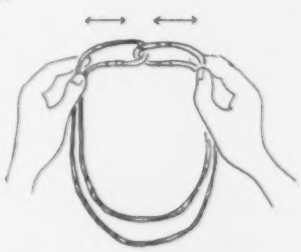
Turn the same ring again so that it has undergone one complete turn or two half-turns.

3. 'She takes off her necklace,
And tests the clasp ...'

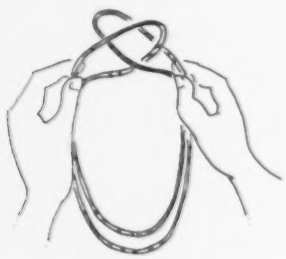
Take the strings with the right hand through the hanging loops. Release the left hand.

4. 'It is strong,
It will last,
For as long.
As her heart ...'

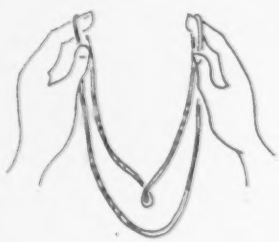
Move your hands together and apart a few times to test the clasp.



5. '... Does not break
In fear,
Which it will,
If the dragon,
Comes near.
Dry your tear,
My dear,
Someone will come
But now the clasp
Is broken ...'

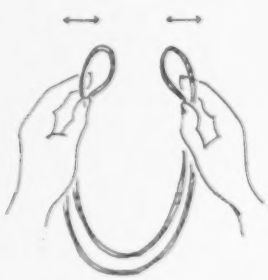


Make sure the loop of the lower heart-strings hangs freely. Drop the lower heart-strings and 'tear-drops' may form.



6. Pull apart to make the tear-drop disappear.

7. Move hands together and apart to show that the clasp is broken.



Game and story devised by Michael Taylor

60. THE GNOMES' NEW HATS

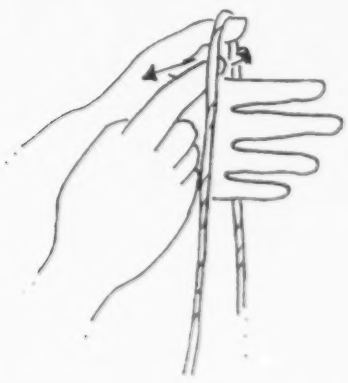
'Once upon a time there were four gnomes. Now, as everybody knows, gnomes always wear hats. However these gnomes had lost their hats. So they went to the hat-maker in their neighbouring village.

"Please, Mr Hatmaker, could you make us four new hats?" The hat-maker bowed. "Certainly, my dear Gnomes." He called to his helper to fetch some thread from the cupboard. The helper reached between the Hatter and Pointer gnome and took out some thread.'

Hang the string loop over the fingers and thumb of your left (or helper) hand.

Put your right (or user) hand into the hanging loop so that both hands are facing in the same direction.

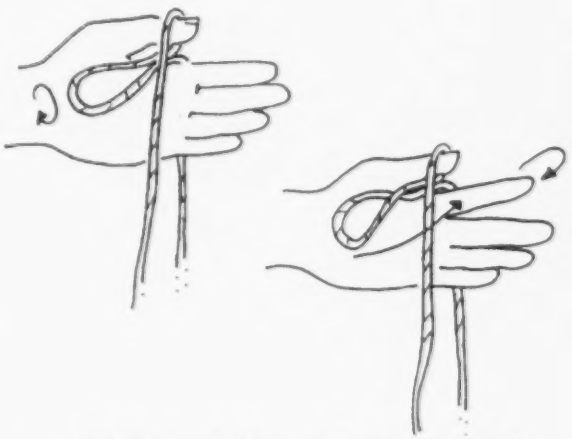
Use your right hand index finger like a hook to take hold of the string that lies on the back of your left hand between your left thumb and index finger.



'The helper then did a magic dance. With the thread on his finger he pointed away from the gnomes, then up to the sky, walked over to Pointer gnome and slipped a new hat on his head.'

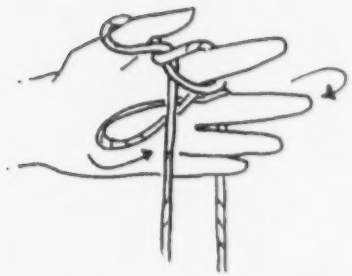
Now, with your right index finger, pull out a short loop of string. Pull the loop out under the string that hangs over your left thumb. You must keep this loop straight.

Hold this loop with your right index finger and thumb and give it half a twist ——> clockwise making a 'X' in it towards your left little finger. Put this loop on your left index finger and gently pull the hanging loop to tighten the design. Be careful not to twist the loop again when you put it on your finger.



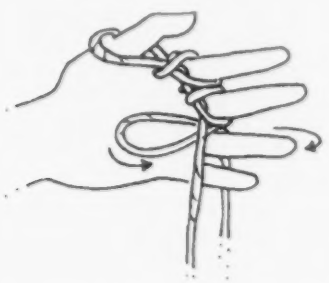
'He then reached between Pointer gnome and Long-one gnome and took out some thread. He did the same magic dance and placed a newly made hat on Long-one's head.'

Now you must repeat this to put loops on the rest of your fingers. Keep one string hanging down across your palm and one hanging down across the back of your hand. Always put your right index finger under the string hanging down across your palm and use it like a hook. As you repeat this you can check if you are getting it right by checking the back of your left hand where you will see a double threaded 'ring' on each of your fingers.



'He then reached between Long-one and Ring-one and took out some thread. He did the magic dance and placed the new hat on Ring-one's head.'

Make exactly the same action as before but this time you reach between the middle and ring finger and hook the string that is resting on the back of the hand. Pull it through and give it a twist and place the loop over the ring finger of the left hand

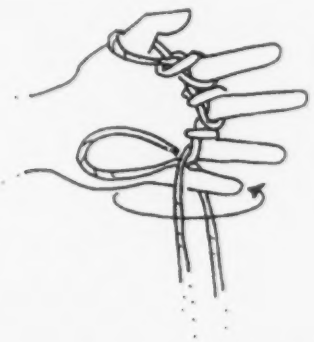


'Finally he reached between Ring-one and Pinky gnome and drew out some thread, did his magic dance, and placed the last new hat on Pinky gnome's head.'

The action is again repeated by reaching between the ring finger and the little finger of your left hand with your right index finger and hooking the thread that lies on the back of your hand. Give it the twist that has been described and place the loop over the little finger on the left hand.

'The gnomes were very pleased; they thanked and bowed to the Hatter and his helper. The Hatter bowed and took off his own hat and whispered something to the Helper.'

Firstly the four fingers of the left hand make a fist and then open – be careful that no loops fall off. Next the thumb on your left hand drops towards the palm of your left hand and while doing so lets the loop around it fall off. The index finger of your right hand gently touches the thumb of the left (this is the Helper and the Hatter whispering).



'They all bowed again and the Hatter then said the magic words'

Im pom pay,
Beards and beer,
Hip, hop, hat,
And disappear.

'As these words were being said the Helper took hold of a special thread that was unseen by the gnomes, and as soon as the gnomes were all on the street outside the shop, whoosh! – the Helper pulled on the thread and the hats all disappeared!'

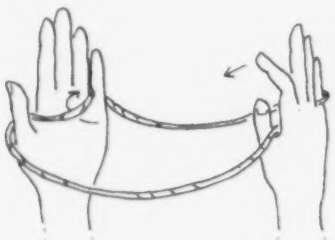
With the index finger and thumb of your right hand pull on the front string of the hanging loop so that all the loops around all the fingers disappear.

(story devised by Sue Sim)

61. THE TENT

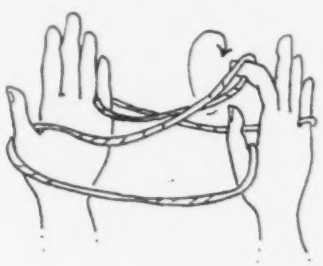
Pointer went walking in the woods one day
Went under a log
Stood up and ran away.

Your right index finger goes under the left palm string, pulls it out and back to a position near where the right came from.

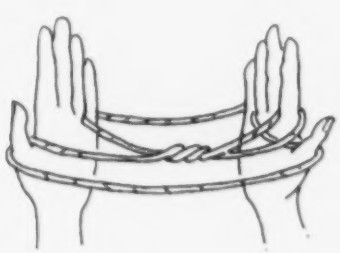


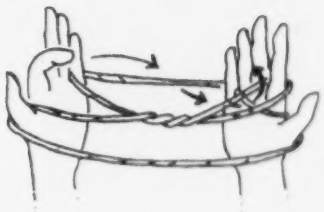
Pointer runs around the tree
And round the tree again.

Your right index finger twists its loop.



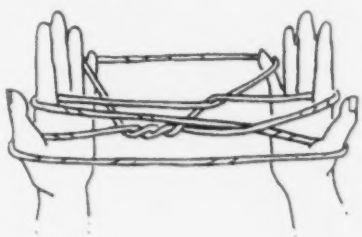
Now do it again. There are now two twists in the strings of the right index loop. To put a twist in the loop rotate your index finger away from you and upwards as if you were pointing at the ceiling. Ensure the loop is in the string, and not around your finger.





Long-un spies a rabbit hole
Goes under, up and then ...

Next your right index finger pulls its twisted loop as far as it will go. Now your left index finger picks up, from below, the string that is lying on your right palm, and pulls it between the string that forms a loop around your right index finger. Now pull this loop back as far as it will go.

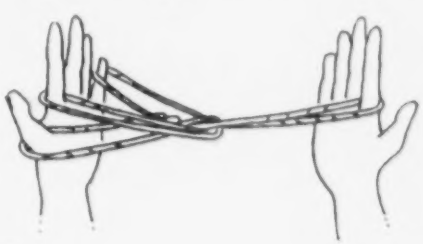


Pinky is tired and drops her loop and
Thumbkin looks all spent,

Your right thumb and your right little finger drop their loops.

But pointer goes and wakes them up.
'Cos look! ... they've made a tent!

Pull your right index finger out as far as it will go so that the loops move up the strings as far as they will, thus making a tent shape.



When you wish to end the string games, ask the children to make a necklace/tie with the string, by putting it over their heads and letting it rest around their necks like a necklace.

Chapter 3
Water Games

I have always found that children learn to swim best when they are enjoying themselves, and when they are taught through creative images. Children who are afraid of water acquire this fear through being forced into it in an inappropriate manner. Over the last fifteen years I have developed a series of games which encourage the child to learn to swim without any trauma, and without consciously knowing about swimming 'techniques'. I spend a lot of time on what I call 'water orientation', using games so that the children learn to make their way through or under the water because the game necessitates it.

I teach water orientation and swimming by being in the water with the children myself. I believe that the trust that the children have in you (slowly built up over time) is reinforced, and not destroyed, by being in the water with them. Many swimming instructors stand on the edge of the pool and command the children to move *away* from them: away from safety, in other words. Of course your peripheral vision is not as good in the water, so I always have a life-saver watching from a stand at the edge of the pool.

If a child has confidence in the water, she will be able to float and relax when in danger, which will greatly increase her chances of being rescued. In orientating children to water, I spend time teaching them to relax in the water and stay afloat – and these motions stay in the children's movement memories. All the 'skills' I teach are through simple water games, which make 'lessons' fun.

Children have a natural movement wisdom: they instinctively gravitate towards certain games and activities at certain ages. So I try to teach children to swim *when it's the right time for them*, which is usually between the ages of 7 and 9. Though the water-orientation programmes usually get them swimming sooner! In fact, water-orientation can begin when the child is still a baby, playing in the bath with the mother or father.

A word of caution: children *can* become so secure in the water that they are at times over-confident, placing themselves in dangerous situations. At the stage when their confidence is growing but they cannot yet properly swim, extra vigilance is needed in supervising them.

Water games are the subject for another entire book – so the examples given here are to stimulate your own imagination. Also, many of the games in the other chapters can easily be adapted for use in water.

Age 3 - 5

Simply getting wet and being immersed in water can be traumatic for a child. I usually start water-orientation by allowing the young children to gradually get used to the feel of the water on their bodies.

62. THE TICKLE FISH

The children sit on the edge of the pool, with their feet just above the water. They put their feet on the surface of the water, as if to walk on it. They lower their feet into the water.

The leader is a fish, who 'nibbles' or tickles the children's feet with her hands.

63. THE PADDLE STEAMER

Again, the children sit on the edge of the pool, with their feet in the water. They kick their legs, splashing the water – as if they were the paddles of a paddle steamer.

64. RING-A-RING-A-ROSES

The children hold hands, and follow the leader down the steps (if there are some) into the pool. They stand in water approximately up to their waists or lower. They sing the song and play the game:

Ring a ring a roses
(the children walk around in a circle)
A pocket full of posies.
Atishoo! Atishoo!
We all fall down.
(they fall into the water)

65. KANGAROOS

In the water, the children stand in a circle holding hands. They jump like kangaroos into the centre of the circle.

They also love to play Kangaroo Chasey, in which they all have to hop to get away from *'It'*, who also has to hop.

66. CORK SCRAMBLE

Equipment: as many corks as you can get

Throw the corks into the waist-deep water. I say to the children, 'Let's see how many we can get before I have ...!' (e.g. '... sung a song,' '...clapped for twenty counts,' etc.)

67. THE STEALTHY CROCODILE

The children stand in the water in a circle, holding hands. They are crocodiles stealing through the water. They move silently towards the centre of the circle, with their chins on or beneath the water, and their eyes watching for prey!

68. BEACHED WHALE

One child is the whale. The other children form the beach by standing in two lines, facing a partner, and holding their partner's hands. The whale slithers across the beach of arms to the other side.

The children forming the beach can dip beneath the water as the whale goes over their arms, so that her weight is made buoyant.

69. WAGON WHEELS

Equipment: one kicking board

The children stand in a circle around the kicking board, holding hands. They move round the circle, faster and faster, so that a whirlpool is created in the centre of the circle.

Then they form a wagon wheel by putting their legs on the board in the centre of the circle, and lie on their backs.

This is one of the children's favourite games so I usually end with it: there is a brief moment of peace when they are all lying on their backs sailing around the whirlpool. It can also be done by simply holding hands in a circle and following the same steps.

Age 6 - 7

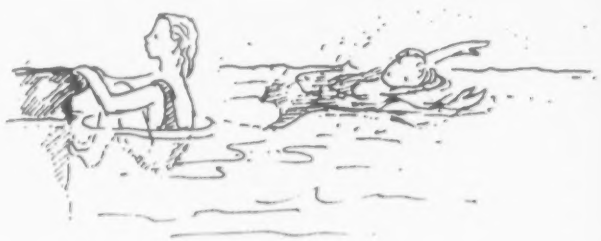
The growing child spends the first 9 years of her life struggling against gravity, learning to walk and be upright. Subconsciously, then, the child has a resistance to being horizontal: especially if she is face down in water. The only time children usually go into the horizontal plane is when they are sleeping: and if they are forced into swimming too abruptly, they can feel afraid that they will slip into unconsciousness. It is partly for this reason that so many children have a strong aversion to putting their face into the water.

But when the children are 9 or 10 years old they have developed more of their own individuality, and can therefore more easily relax into a horizontal position in water. I always begin by helping them learn to be comfortable in the horizontal plane, initially *on their backs.*

70. TORPEDOES

The children are torpedoes that shoot through the water and explode any ship or vessel they may hit. They begin by holding onto the side of the pool with both hands, and then push away with their legs, their arms outstretched in front of them..

You can put a few kicking boards in the pool, to be floating ships. At first this is done with the children on their backs. Later it can be done face down.



71. TANGLES

The children are in the water. They bunch together, putting both hands into the centre of the circle.

Each child takes hold of any hand in the clump: but not two of the same person. They move back, trying to untangle their hands and re-emerge – as a circle!

72. CROCODILES ON THE BANK

The child is the crocodile. He sits on the bank of the river (side of the pool). The leader stands on one side of him.

The crocodile first puts his jaws into the river (the child stretches her arms out in front of his body), and then the rest of his body.

The leader supports the crocodile, under his tummy.

73. CROCODILE CAVE

Equipment: 3 floating hoops

The crocodiles start on the bank of the river. They must move, one by one, through the crocodile's caves (the hoops). A whole course can be set up, with hoops at different heights (see Equipment).

74. CANOES

Equipment: ropes with floater
floating hoops
kicking boards ('canoes')

A course can be made with floating hoops and ropes for the Indians in their canoes to paddle through. They may be alone in their canoe, or two or three per canoe.

The Indians must not bump any part of the course (banks of the river, floating logs, islands ...)

75. PROPELLERS

One child holds the kicking board outstretched in front of her. She kicks her legs: she is the propeller.

The 'boat' may also have a helmsman, who steers by paddling. Many chasing games can be played like this.

With children of this age, you can play water versions of many of the chasing games outlined in other chapters. For example, *Circle Cat and Mouse, Scarecrows, Crows and Cranes ...*

76. PONTOONS

One child is a traveller, who wishes to cross over the river. The rest of the children form the two parts of the pontoon, by standing in two lines with their arms on one anothers' shoulders.

The first pontoon in each line holds onto the side of the pool where the traveller is. As the traveller steps onto the pontoon, the players lower their shoulders in the water, so that the weight of the traveller is made buoyant by the water.

Two teams can be formed: with two travellers and two pontoons of two lines each (total of four lines of players).

Part Two

Exploring the House

Games for the 7 - 12 year-old

Chapter 4
Age 7 - 8

SKIPPING GAMES

Many children enjoy skipping when they are younger than seven. This is not surprising, since the 'classic' threshold ages of seven, nine, twelve, fourteen and so on, are becoming less clear. In the past, outer signs of change – such as the change of teeth – would almost exclusively occur around the age of seven. Now it can occur at any time between four and ten – or even twelve in some instances. Likewise, puberty can begin at any time between the ages of nine and sixteen. In the past, emotional and physical maturation was more closely linked; nowadays, early physical and late emotional development is becoming increasingly common. The stress, insecurity and behavioural changes that are often associated with these thresholds is thereby prolonged.

When introducing skipping (jump-rope), it is good to start with group activities, and then move towards individual tasks. Running through the rope in pairs, for instance, will be easier for a child who is just beginning to skip, than doing it alone. The chanting of rhymes helps the skippers to participate in the rhythm of the moving rope: so it is important to speak the verses (or sing the songs) as rhythmically as possible. Also, the verses and words invite the child to cross a threshold, to have the courage to approach the moving rope.

Skipping is beneficial for the six to eight year-olds, for it is now that they really begin to experience the world as separate from themselves. The rope symbolises an external object that needs coming to terms with, a force that exists outside themselves, that has its own rhythm which must be understood and accepted.

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Running through the rope

Equipment: a rope for skipping

With the children on your right, swing the rope clockwise. Ask children to run through in pairs while saying this verse:

77. COME IN, COME IN

Come in, come in
Come knock at my door
Run through, run round
And back for more.

(on each underlined word, the rope touches the ground)

Then ask one child in the pair to close his eyes. The other child leads him through.

I take my love
And knock at the door
Run through, run round
And back for more.

Now they must run in and jump once over the rope, and then run out, while this verse is said:

Come in, come in
Come knock at the door
One skip and out
And back for more.

Once the children have mastered this, keep them on your right but turn the rope anti-clockwise. Now they must jump over the rope and immediately run out.

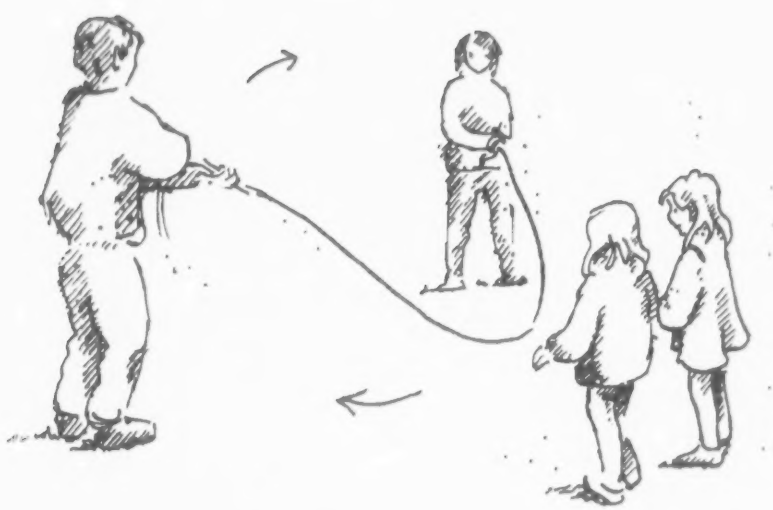
When the children are a little older and more proficient, you can begin to turn the rope in an anti-clockwise direction (relative to where the children are queuing up for a turn to skip), because this is more challenging: it does not invite them in, as a rope turned clockwise does.

Skipping helps the children become aware of the world around them. The moving rope is a barrier outside themselves that they have to conquer. They have no control over it – and this can be quite threatening to some – especially boys. Many boys will reject skipping because they fear that their failure to succeed will be exposed. It is helpful when introducing skipping to explain to the children that skipping takes courage. Find an image or a picture that they can identify with – for example, the picture of a knight who is brave enough to go near the dragon's jaws.

78. THE TEETH OF THE DRAGON

The teeth of the dragon
They open and shut
Run for your life
And don't get cut!

Leading a person through with shut eyes is a good exercise to counteract bullying – I tend to pair the bullies with their victims, so that each child has a turn to lead the other, in a caring and responsible way.

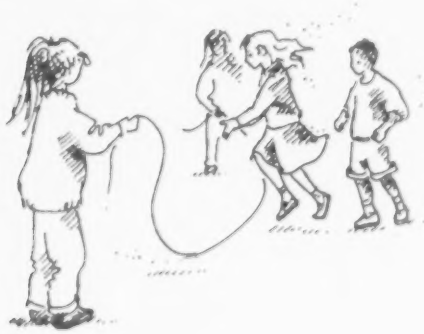


79. THE ROCKING BOAT

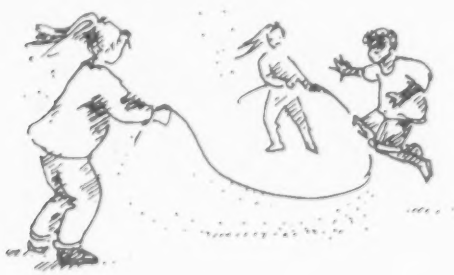
Equipment: a heavy skipping rope

This game can be done in pairs holding hands. The pairs, once they have made it through, split up and circle back to the line on opposite sides, where they meet again. This particularly helps children who are less confident.

We went to sea in a pea green boat
In a pea green boat, with a big warm coat
(the rope rocks gently back and forth, while one at a time, the skippers jump over the rope)



The first wave rocked and rocked around
(the rocking of the rope gets bigger)



The snakes they slithered without a sound
(the rope is laid on the floor and moved left and right by the turners)

Then two waves rolled and rolled around
(the rope is pulled tight across the floor by the turners. One turner flicks the rope and sends a wave-like motion down the length of the rope to the other turner. The turner who received the wave now returns it using the same technique. The wave that is created is about 18 inches / 45cm high.)

And turned the boat upside down
(now the rope is turned over in traditional skipping style so that they may run through without having to jump)

Upside down, down-side up
(repeat last indication)

And we all dried off in a fisherman's hut.
(repeat last indication until all the children have had a chance to try to run through; and then begin again at the beginning)

80. HIGHS, LOWS

Equipment: a heavy skipping rope

Turn the rope clockwise, with the children on your right. The children run in and jump over the rope to the following verse:

> High, lows, stars and peppers
> Scissors, turn around, touch the ground.
> Faster ...

The rope touches the ground when the underlined words are spoken.
The rope is turned at an increasing pace while the verse is said quicker and quicker.

When the child fails to jump clear or is caught by the rope, he remembers at which part of the verse he stopped. This gives him his own 'task': he has to see how many star jumps, high jumps or whatever, he can do.

If you have a large group of children, a second rope can be used for the 'tasks'.

Stars

Peppers *(jumping over the rope as quickly as possible)*

Variations

Highs

Lows

Turn around *(the child turns around while skipping)*

Touch the ground

Scissors

81. FISHES, FISHES

Equipment: heavy skipping rope
rubber ring (also known as a quoit or hoop)

Fishes, fishes
I need fishes to put in my pot
And eat for dinner.
Some are thin and some are fat

But catch some soon
And that is that.
Sometimes high and sometimes low
And which fish it catches
We'll soon know.

Sit in the centre of the circle of children. You are going to 'fish' with the skipping rope and the children are the fish in the pond. Swing the rope round the circle, and the children jump over the rope and ring ('the fishing hook') as it comes past. When you say the words 'sometimes high', pause in the verse and swing the rope around above the children's heads. Tell them to crouch down while you do this. Then bring in the rope and make it swing near the floor again ('sometimes low').

Hint to the leader: Pass the rope behind your back as it moves in a circular motion, in this way the rope whizzes around without you becoming very dizzy.

Before the rope goes up above the heads of the children, pull it back closer to yourself, increase the height, then let it out again. Make sure it is a soft rubber ring and that it is kept well above the heads of the skippers.

What to do if a child fails to jump clear of the rope? You can tell children who fail to jump clear of the rope to 'go to the edge of the pond'. When the third child goes to the edge of the pond, tell the first child to rejoin the circle of fishes. With older children you can instead tell the children who don't jump clear to skip over the rope in a different way from the others. The first time, the child might do a step jump; on the second fault, a star jump; on the third fault a turnaround, and on the fourth fault become a 'frog', to crouch and jump over the rope from that position three times successfully.

Recently, however, when I was playing this game with a group of children, one who was 'sent out' of the pond became upset. The rest of the children were quite disturbed by his feelings. So I wondered if I could find a different 'consequence' for those children who failed to jump clear of the rope. When discussing this with a group of student teachers, one made a suggestion that I hadn't thought of during all the years I have played this game: the child is still sent to the 'edge of the pond', but if the rest of the 'fishes' jump clear of the rope for the next three times, the 'fish out of water' is allowed to return to the pond. I thought this was a very useful suggestion: the group helps the 'excluded' child to return to the circle and he is then unlikely to feel outcast or rejected.

CREATING YOUR OWN RHYMES

Creating your own verses, rhymes and skipping games is not as difficult as you would imagine. For instance, a class of student-teachers were given the example of a skipping game *(The Fisherman's Hut)*, and then asked to produce some games of their own.

Here are three that were written:

82. WAVES ON THE SEA SHORE

Waves on the sea-shore
Rolling, rolling
Waves on the sea-shore
Rolling, rolling
Fish in the water
Swishing, swishing
Fish in the water
Swishing, swishing
Lightning and thunder
Flashing and crashing
Lightning and thunder
Flashing and crashing
Don't get wet!
Don't get wet!

Rose, Barbara, Guido and Anna

83. OH LOOK! THE WINDING BROOK

Oh ... look! The winding brook!
Have you seen ... the rippling stream?
Let's be a swimmer, in the river!
Now jump free through the tumbling sea!

Judit, Shirley, Simon and Nantia

84. DOWN BY THE POND

Down by the pond where the fish do play
In jumped a frog and scared them all away
Down by the pond where the frogs do play
In jumped a duck and scared them all away
Down by the pond where the ducks do play
In jumped a fox and scared them all away
Down by the pond where the foxes play
In jumped a croc(odile) and scared them all away
Down by the pond where the croc(odile)s play
Along came **Rebecca** *(use child's own name)*
And scared them all away

Rebecca, Alison, Arlene and Natasha

Here are some more skipping rhymes overheard in playgrounds around the world:

85. THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN TOSSED UP IN A BASKET

There was an old woman tossed up in a basket,
(the rope is swung up and the skipper runs in)

Ninety-nine times as high as the moon,
*(the skipper calls out the **number of skips** he has to do before continuing the rhyme)*

And where she was going I could not but ask it.
(skipper shakes his head)

For in her hand she carried a broom.
(skipper pretends to hold a broom)

'Old woman, old woman, old woman' quoth I,
(skipper pretends to hunch over like an old lady)

'Whither are you going to up so high?'
(on the word 'up' the skipper must jump so that his knees touch his chest)

'To sweep the cobwebs out of the sky'
(skipper pretends to jump high and sweep the sky with his broom)

'May we go with you?' 'Aye bye and bye'
(the skipper jumps out of the rope and a new skipper comes in. Alternatively the original skipper stays in and is joined by another. They then skip together. At the end of each successful rhyme a new skipper joins. In this version you can see how many skippers join in before a mistake is made)

It's interesting to note that playground skipping chants often reflect social issues, such as addiction:

86. I LIKE COFFEE, I LIKE TEA

I like coffee, I like tea,
I want Jonathan in with me.
I don't like coffee, I don't like tea,
I don't want Elizabeth in with me.

All in, a bottle of gin,
(one by one all the skippers attempt to join in)

All out, a bottle of stout.
(one by one all the skippers attempt to run out of the rope; the first skipper in is the first one to leave, and so on)

87. TEDDY BEAR, TEDDY BEAR

The skippers take it in turns to complete the verse and its tasks.

Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground.
(the skipper touches the ground)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around.
(skipper turns around while skipping)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, walk up the stairs
(skipper mimes action; one knee lifted at a time)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, say your prayers
(holds hands as if praying)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn off the light,
(mimes action.)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, spell 'good night'.

G.O.O.D.N.I.G.H.T!

88. JOHNNY OVER THE OCEAN

Johnny over the ocean,
Johnny over the sea,
Johnny broke a tea cup,
And blamed it on me.
I told Pa,
Pa told Ma.
Johnny got in trouble,
Ha, ha, ha !
Salt, honey, mustard, PEPPER !

When the word 'Pepper' is called, the rope-turners turn the rope **very fast.**

89. KEEP THE KETTLE BOILING

Keep the kettle boiling,
Don't be late,
Keep the kettle boiling.
Call the rate.

All the skippers line up. One at a time they run through the rope and back round to the starting side. For each turn of the rope, one skipper should run through. If the skipper does not make it back in time or gets caught with the rope, he becomes the next rope-turner. If there are lots of skippers playing, an object may be touched after the run-through, before the skipper can return to try again. This may be a nearby tree or wall. When 'Call the rate' is said, one of the skippers may say a number like 'one' or 'three'; this means that you must skip the number that was called before trying to get out.

90. DOWN BY THE OCEAN

Down by the ocean,
Down by the sea,
Simon went fishing.
With Daddy and me.

How many fishes did Simon catch.
One, two, three, four, five, six, seven ...

In this case the name of the skipper is Simon. It is changed as each new skipper comes in. The rope is kept turning as the number of skips is counted. As the number increases the rope gets faster.

91. EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY

Everybody, everybody,
Come on in,
The first one that misses,
Takes the end.

The first skipper to get caught by the rope has to take the place of one of the children who were turning it.

92. CHANGING BEDROOMS

Changing bedrooms number 1
Changing bedrooms number 2
Changing bedrooms number 3
Changing bedrooms number 4

The skippers run in from each side, changing places with one another as each number is called. They do this by timing their move and jumping in a 180 degree turn. Of course it is much harder to run into the moving rope when you are standing on the side: you have to jump straight in.

93. ALL IN TOGETHER GIRLS

All in together girls,
How do you like the weather, girls?
January, February, March, April, May ...

Each skipper runs in when she hears the month she was born in called out. When all the skippers are in, the rhyme is repeated and each skipper jumps out when her month is called. Then it is the boys' turn and the word 'girls' is changed to 'boys'.

79

***Children's feet** need to develop naturally, and should not be formed from the outside by shoes that impose a predesigned shape. Sports shoes may do this, particularly those with a pronounced cushioning heel. I have seen children who usually wear such shoes actually bruising their heels when they come to run or walk with bare feet. They do not actually 'meet the earth': they are semi-permanently cut off from fully meeting the resistance and solidity of the ground beneath them.*

The sayings we have in every-day speech, such as 'standing on firm ground', 'digging your heels in', 'having the world at your feet', or 'a well-grounded person', are made nonsense of by the foot-wear that popular fashion now dictates. Contrary to popular opinion, built-up arches in shoes do not always counteract such problems as fallen arches. In fact, wearing shoes that mould the feet can lead to less malleability and strength in the arches as well as in the lower leg muscles. Problems with foot formation may develop which in turn adversely affect the ankles, knees, hips and spine. At this stage it may be helpful to seek expert advice, and in some cases specific corrective inserts are placed in the shoe.

Current footwear fashions are almost like an inversion of the much derided tradition of foot binding carried out in China and Japan in the past. The result is similar, since the foot loses the ability to form itself in a healthy way. Sports shoes should be worn for sport only. At other times, the wearing of plain thin-soled shoes and sandals – or, when the weather or situation permits, running about bare-footed – and the playing of games that increase foot flexibility, will contribute to the child's overall health.

94. THE WATER BIRD

Equipment: a bag of marbles of mixed sizes,
a tumbling mat or carpet

Ask the children to take off their shoes and socks. Scatter the marbles on a tumbling-mat or carpet. Tell them that they are water birds, and must see how many marbles they can pick up, only using their toes, while the rhyme written below is said. (Children should not bend down to transfer the marble from the foot into the hand. They should try and lift the foot as high as possible, without dropping the marble!)

Standing in the lake
Is a long, tall crane
Little fishes in the water
In and out again.

With his feet he gathers
All his food for the day
As many little fishes
As a tall crane may.

When I do this with the children, it becomes very clear to me which of them wear shoes that mould the feet, and which don't. The children who wear only training or sports shoes often do not have the flexibility and control in their feet that is needed to pick up small objects, such as marbles; this has far-reaching consequences.

95. CHINESE HOP

Equipment: one wooden staff per player

Divide the players into two teams. Each team lays out a 'ladder' of staffs, about 45cm / 18 inches apart, on the ground in front of it. There must be a staff for each player in the team.

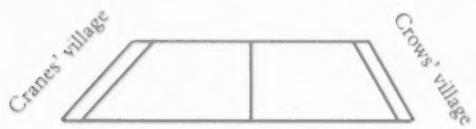
When the teams have lined up behind their 'ladder', the leader gives the sign for the race to begin. The first player of each team hops on one foot over each staff, picks up the last staff in the row, and hops back over the rest of the staffs. He tips the next player, who repeats his actions.

Players must not put the other foot on the ground or touch a staff by mistake. The first team to pick up all its staffs wins.

96. CROWS AND CRANES / INDIAN NATIONS

Equipment:

Drum (not essential, but good to have)
Coloured headbands – one for each child (optional).
One could also use ground chalk or face-paints for the children to paint their faces.



Divide the class into two tribes. Give the tribes names that begin with the same letter: e.g. Cranes and Crows. Each tribe has its own demarcated territory – their village – at each end of the playing area, not more than 50 paces apart. This may be a line drawn with chalk, it may be a tree. (If you are playing this game outdoors it is particularly important to demarcate the two villages.)

The drum is beaten and the first sounds of the names, (e.g. **'Crrrr ...'**) is called out. The tribes advance towards one another, taking one step for each drum beat.

The drummer calls out the name of a tribe, e.g. **'CRANES!'**. The Cranes turn round as quickly as possible and run back to their village with the Crows in hot pursuit. (You don't necessarily have to call out the names of the tribes alternately – life isn't always fair!)

The fleeing Indians are safe when they get back to their village. The prisoners that have been caught are proudly led back by their brave captors to the victorious tribe. They are then ordained as members of that tribe. The process is repeated over and over until all of one tribe has been caught.

Variations

* This game can be played with four tribes. Then it is important to have enough headbands of four different colours, so the children know who is who.

* I have also played this game as a water game, in swimming-pools.

* If a player who is pursuing another, crosses the line and into the fleeing players' territory, the fleeing player may turn around and capture his pursuer.

Crows and Cranes is a popular game with 8-9 year olds, and also provides the opportunity to learn some very valuable things about oneself. It places children in situations where they are faced with the consequences of the kind of person they are. For instance, the children who have bold and loud natures, (referred to as the Napoleons in the section on 'Children who break the rules') will march so confidently, so eagerly into battle, that they will often forget to take their army with them. Then they are very likely to be captured and have to join the other tribe.

But the children who are more timid and quiet by nature usually don't get caught by the other tribe until the end, because they take small, cautious steps and so remain closer to their village. Towards the end of the game, they are likely to be left alone facing a huge advancing tribe. This situation provides them with an opportunity to transform their timid natures by showing courage. This enables the game leader to work *with* the children, rather than against them. If you were to *force* a timid child to take big steps, this might well lead to tears and fear. When the game itself presents the child with the consequences of his behaviour, he can learn to change more easily and 'organically'.

97. WIND, MOON AND RAINBOW

When introducing a game such as *Wind, Moon and Rainbows* to young children, it is pedagogically sound, as well as helpful, to present an imaginative picture of the game and its rules. This can most easily be done by telling a story. The children can huddle round while you do so. The next game is presented in a story form, as an example.

'Once upon a time, the north wind decided to make chaos in the universe. So he blew with all his might, and scattered the moon, stars and planets to the far reaches of the world. An old man, a wizard, saw what the north wind had done, so he wandered all over the universe, and wherever he walked, rainbows formed. But when the north wind found out what the wizard was doing, he flew off, blowing beneath the still and beautiful rainbows and making them scatter hither and thither.

The wizard decided that he needed help. So he journeyed to the moon, and asked her if she could help him. Then he went to the morning star, and asked her if she could also help. Then the moon and the morning star began to look for the rainbows, and when they had found them, left them shining quietly again, gently touching the earth. But the moon left the north wind until last; at last, with the help of the morning star, she brought his mischief to an end.'

One child is the north wind. One child is the moon, another the morning star. The other children are quietly shining rainbows, who are scattered across the universe. (The rainbows make an arc with their bodies by touching the ground in front of them with their hands.)

The north wind frees them by nipping beneath this arc. But the moon doesn't like the chaos the wind has made, so with the help of the morning star he finds each rainbow and touches it gently; then the rainbow finds a place to rest on the earth. (They sit down once tagged.)

Finally, when all the rainbows are quietly on the earth, the moon catches the north wind.

This game presents a picture of order and chaos to the children. Although life can appear unordered and without structure, it is possible to find peace and stillness, without losing a sense of life (the rainbows continue to shine once they are on the earth). Paradoxically, there is also a sense that the rainbows do not have much control over their fate – they are blown around by the north wind, and settled by the moon upon the earth. But each individual suffers the same fate: not only are the rainbows touched by the moon, but so is the north wind eventually, who caused all the trouble in the beginning. Perhaps one can say that this picture is one of final justice – that everyone will finally meet his or her own destiny.

98. HOT POTATO

Equipment: 1 - 4 beanbags

Tell the children that the beanbag is a very hot potato. They must pass it round the circle, throwing and catching it as quickly as possible, so that it doesn't get a chance to burn their hands.

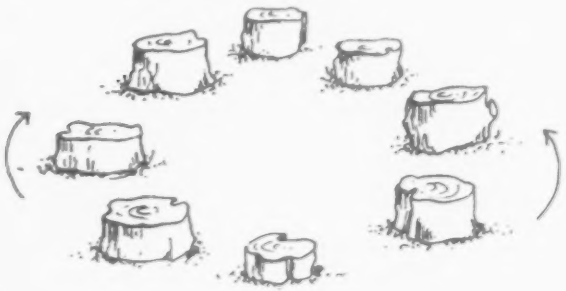
Begin by passing one beanbag around the circle. Later introduce a number of other beanbags. You can also decide to change direction when a beanbag is dropped. This means that the children have to listen carefully for the word **'Change!'**, while throwing and catching. Try to encourage the children to pass and give the beanbag in one action, so that they don't actually hold the beanbag still at any one time. The beanbag will then pass around the circle in one continuous movement.

It is good to encourage children to explore other ways of throwing and catching. Now describe the 'hot potato' as a 'heavy pumpkin'. Show the children how to let the 'weight' of the pumpkin determine the arc of the passage.

99. TRIBAL LAND (1)

Equipment: sections of logs arranged in a circle.

If you are playing outdoors near trees, you can tie a rope to a tree, so that children can use this to swing across between logs.



Divide the children into two 'tribes'. The aim of the game is for the whole tribe to complete their journey home - to jump from log to log round the whole circle without falling off.

The tribes start their journeys – they start at the same point in the circle, but one tribe goes clockwise and the other anti-clockwise round the circle. But on the way they meet their friends. Unfortunately they meet them on a narrow path on the side of a cliff/in the middle of a deep marsh. They have to grit their teeth and try to pass one another without falling into the marsh, or down the cliff. However, if a member of the tribe falls, both tribes have to retreat and start the journey again.

100. TRIBAL LAND (2)

Equipment: sections of logs, planks of various widths and lengths (3 or 4 is enough).

Preparation: Set out the logs, carefully matching the distance between the logs and the planks – so that the longest plank can only be used in one place.

Again the children can be a tribe who are journeying. However, this time there is only one tribe who must pass over the treacherous marsh without falling in and drowning, and reach their village (the other side) safely.

If one member of the tribe falls off a log, then everyone must return and start again. But eventually they reach a log that they cannot jump to (a bit out of their reach), and then some problem-solving is needed.

I usually place the planks, without comment, in a pile on one side of the play area, and wait to see who thinks of using them. Once they realise the planks can be used, the tribe can make them into bridges for crossing the marsh. But if a bridge falls into the marsh, it is lost. They have to take the bridges with them when the last member of the tribe has crossed – otherwise their village will be in danger of attack from enemies.

When children are about 8 years old, they begin to experience the world as separate from them. They may also start feeling separated from the other children; though this is a painful experience, it is also a sign of their growing individuality.

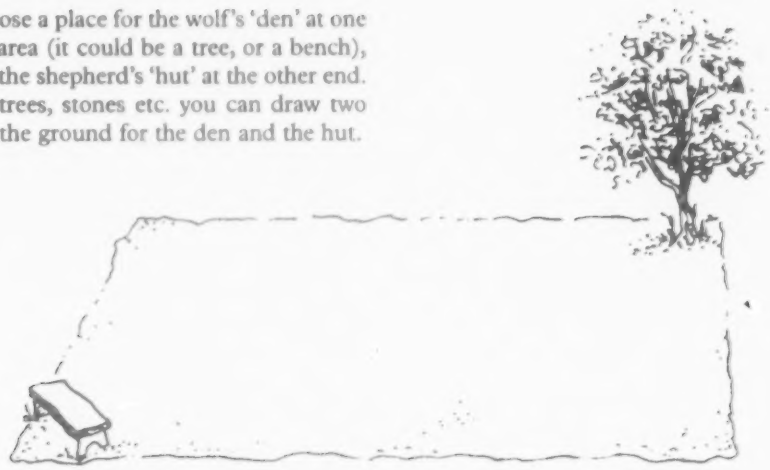
Both versions of *Tribal Land* allow children to explore their newly-emerging individuality through the outer effects of their actions. For instance, in *Tribal Land (1)*, the Napoleons of the class will probably take charge, organise their tribes, and boldly set off. But when they meet the 'leader' of the other tribe, they are faced with a dilemma. What they wish to do is throw the other one off the cliff – but that would mean everyone would have to begin the journey again. I have seen two choleric children meet face to face like this – but then find a socially healthy solution: they used their strengths and abilities to support those children who had to pass them.

I have also often seen a group help a very sanguine child who would set off gaily skipping from log to log – but in such a dreamy way that he inevitably fell. Then the others, with a loud groan, would all have to return to the start. The sanguine child might repeat this many times before realising what he was doing, and how it was affecting all the other players. Finally, another surer-footed and slower child would take his hand so that they could reach the other side successfully.

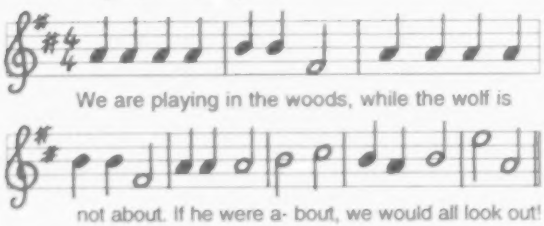
In *Tribal Land (2)* it is often the melancholic child who will notice the planks lying on the side of the play area. The other children will then look at him in a new way – he has provided a solution to their problem!

101. WOLF AND SHEEP

Play area: Choose a place for the wolf's 'den' at one end of the play area (it could be a tree, or a bench), and another for the shepherd's 'hut' at the other end. If you have no trees, stones etc. you can draw two small circles on the ground for the den and the hut.



One child is the wolf. He is in his 'den'. Another child is the shepherd. He has a hut, but is looking after the sheep. The rest of the children are the sheep. They are playing in a meadow: they stand in a circle and hold hands. They skip around the circle while singing this song:



Then they call out, **'Wolf! Wolf! Where are you?'** The wolf answers, **'I am getting out of bed'** (while miming the action). The sheep sing the song again, call out to the wolf, and he answers again. For example, **'I am putting on my boots.'**

The sheep sing the song and ask the question, and the wolf answers, describing how he is getting ready to go out – each time mentioning and miming another activity (e.g. combing my hair, taking a shower.)

But then the wolf is finally ready to chase the sheep, and in answer to the sheep's question, he now calls out, **'I'm ready for my BREAKFAST!'**

The wolf chases the sheep and tries to tag as many as possible. When they are tagged they go to his den. But the shepherd can save the sheep from the wolf's den, by accompanying them, holding them by both hands, to his hut. The wolf, though, can try to tag them on the way. If he gets them, then the shepherd has to return the sheep to the den. If they reach the hut, the sheep is free.

The sheep can also protect themselves from the wolf by skipping around as they hold hands in groups of three. They can stay in this safe circle while they sing the song – but not for longer.

Variations

* If five sheep circle the wolf, they can hold him captive while they sing the song once through, and he stands asleep in the centre of the circle.

* Five sheep can circle the wolf, but he can try to escape by climbing *beneath* the sheep's arms. (Never let the children climb over each other's arms – they can easily fall onto their heads, which makes it rather dangerous!)

The game ends when the wolf has caught all but three of the sheep. I would let these three sheep, as reward for their survival, choose the next wolf and shepherd. If, however, the wolf is not managing to catch the sheep, and the game is dragging on for too long, the leader may call through the woods for another wolf to help his friend. (Choose one or two of the captured sheep to become wolves.)

102. BUNNIES AND BURROWS

Equipment: four or five floor-mats, or hoops
one practice volleyball
three bibs or vests

One child is the fox. The others are bunnies. The mats are burrows. If the bunnies are in their burrows, they are safe.

The fox tries to tag the bunnies when they are running between burrows. When they are tagged, they sit out in the fox's den. As fewer and fewer bunnies remain, some of the burrows 'collapse' (remove one or two of the mats or hoops). When the fox has caught all (or nearly all) of the bunnies, a new fox is chosen and the game begins again.

Variations

* As soon as the first bunny is caught, he becomes the new fox and takes the vests from the old fox, who becomes a bunny.

* For older children, the fox has a ball. He has to brand the bunnies with the ball while they are running between the safety of the burrows. The fox is allowed to run with the ball.

* The fox is not allowed to run with the ball. However, you can increase the number of foxes in the field, perhaps three or four, and then they can throw the ball between themselves.

* Allow only a limited number of bunnies per burrow – e.g. three. When there are more than this number, the fox is free to enter the burrow and tag them.

* A fox's lair is demarcated (with a hoop usually). When the fox catches a bunny, he must go into the fox's lair, and wait to be freed by one of his fellow bunnies. A bunny can free a friend by taking his outstretched hand and running with him to a burrow – they both have to return to a burrow before freeing another imprisoned bunny. Now it is essential to have two foxes – one to guard the bunnies who are imprisoned in the fox's lair, and the other to freely tag the running bunnies.

103. WATER BUNNIES AND BURROWS

This game can easily be adapted for playing in a swimming-pool. For the burrows, demarcate a number of areas on the sides of the pool (one pace long). Place some in the shallow area of the pool, and others in deeper areas.

There can be a time-limit placed on the various 'burrows' – a count of ten for safety areas in deeper water, a count of five for those in shallow water, for instance.)

Other variations

This is such a simple and universal chasing game, that it is very easy to create variations. For instance, I adapted it into *'Tree Tag'* for a playground in Australia, so that the children would remain out of the sun, and mainly run in the shade of the trees. The safe areas ('burrows') were trees marked with ribbons – and instead of bunnies and foxes, the characters were possums and dingoes (a native dog). I introduced new rules for older children, such as a specific times allowed at each tree – a tree with a larger trunk would be able to support a possum for longer than one with a thinner trunk.

104. THE FOUR ELEMENTS

Equipment: one soft playball

The players stand in a circle. The leader stands in the centre of the circle with the ball. As he throws the ball to a player, he calls out the name of one of three elements (fire, air or water.) In this example, **'Air!'** The player catches the ball, and has to think of a creature connected to air: so he says for example, **'Eagle'**. He then throws it back to the leader.

This is repeated over and over again, but the person in the middle will vary the element that is called. A player may only hold the ball for three seconds. (A player is not allowed to name a thing that has been mentioned before.)

However, if the leader calls **'Fire!'**, the player must not touch the ball at all, but let it fall ... If a player fails to think of a response, or catches the ball on 'fire', he is out and joins a going-out/coming-in queue to one side of the circle.

105. CIRCLE CAT AND MOUSE

The players form the mouse's house by standing in a circle, holding hands. One player in this circle is chosen to be the mouse. He stays holding hands within the mouse's house. Outside the house is a cat who tries to catch the mouse. The mouse runs away from the cat, by moving with his 'house'. (The circle can rotate away from the cat.)

Hint to the leader:

You may find that the children do not keep in a circle. Two suggestions:

- Stand in the centre of the circle so the children have a point of reference.
- Make a circle on the ground with a rope – tell the children that the circle they form must stay within this rope.

Unlike later versions of *Cat and Mouse*, the mouse is within the house, and part of it – he is not separated from the group's protection. Also, this game does not have a movement from outside the circle to the centre, or from the centre to the outside; it is therefore less spatially demanding.

106. GRANDMA'S HOUSE

One child is the wolf. Three players form a small circle by holding hands: they are Grandma's house. The wolf chases the children, and tries to tip them. If he tips them, they go into the centre of Grandma's house, where there is a big pot.

If they wish to escape, they can 'knock on the door' of Grandma's house, by holding onto the wrists of the three children forming it. They then become part of the house as well, so that it gets larger and larger as more players seek refuge.

The game can have various endings:

1. The wolf either catches all the children or everyone has joined in Grandmas' house, hence there is no one left to chase.

2. When only one child is left who is neither a part of the house nor in the wolf's pot, he may try to free all the children in the pot by linking hands with Grandmas' house.

3. The same as number 2 but this time the last player left uncaught has to get inside Grandma's house, take one child from the pot and try to get him out of the house without being caught by the wolf. Remember that the wolf cannot enter the house or the pot, but in this instance he tries to catch the last player and the person he is rescuing as they emerge from the house. If the wolf does not succeed in doing this, then the last child wins on behalf of the whole group. Once inside, the last player only has a count of ten in which to try and make his rescue, otherwise the wolf wins.

Devised by Sally Cooper and Lesley Willis

Chapter 5
Age 9 - 10

THE 9 YEAR CRISIS

Around nine years of age the child experiences a transition from late infancy into 'middle childhood'. This is the start of the preparation for what lies ahead in puberty. At this time, children begin to experience their ***separateness from others,*** *which can lead to a more conscious awareness of other people in relationship to themselves. Although most games have an aspect of winning and losing, it is of particular importance at this age that children learn how to accept both roles. At this age their* ***emerging individuality*** *is particularly vulnerable. Any game that could bring about 'pack-hunting' of victims must be very carefully handled. Playing highly competitive and individualistic sports too soon may lead children into an adult-type consciousness of winning at all costs. Children at this age still very much need to have their imaginations stimulated by pictures and rhymes within the game.*

Many adolescent emotional disturbances can be traced back to unresolved traumas around the age of 8, 9 or 10. Children at this age tend to be more open and impressionable. They should be encouraged to work through potential crises, which manifest themselves in various ways at this age. For instance, children often display their emotional difficulties and struggles by sabotaging games. (See under 'Children who break the rules' for the different ways that this is done, and what the root cause could be.)

This is a vital age, where many of the old structures that previously surrounded the child begin to be discarded. Adult instructions and guidance may start to be questioned. What is of great importance is that activities that build a ***new emotional structure*** *and security are engaged in;* ***games which give an outer expression to the inner changes are needed.***

107. ELEPHANTS

One person is an elephant. She makes a trunk with one arm. She chases and tries to tag the other children. When someone is tagged, they are elephants too, and make a trunk, and chase the others.

Variation
Alternatively, (this makes the game last a little longer) when first tagged, the children begin to become elephants – they hold their nose with one hand. When tagged a second time, they grow an elephant's trunk, and can tag others.

This is another game that can effectively be presented through the images of a story: and can easily be adapted to any animal the children may be learning about: kangaroos, storks, frogs, etc.

The image of running hampered by something (in this game, the elephant's trunk) relates to the picture of the 9 year-old. No longer is the child as free from the constraints of the physical world – she is leaving the dreamy world of early childhood behind, and moving on into middle childhood.

As related by Martin Baker

108. FLEAS (also known as Dr Dooby)

One person has fleas. She continually scratches them (e.g. on her head). She tries to tag the others, and to give them fleas too.

If someone is tagged, they must scratch the place where they were tagged. Then they can give others fleas. The game is over when all but one player has fleas.

Variation
To make this game last longer, you can introduce a 'Flea-catcher'. She can start freeing people from their fleas only when at least 8 people are already scratching (out of a group of 20 children).

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109. CAT TRAP

The players form a circle, with feet together and holding hands. This is the mouse's house. One child is the mouse and is in the centre of the circle. Another player is the cat, who is outside the circle and begins by saying:

Cat: Mouse, mouse come out of your house
And I will give you some cheese.

Mouse: Not I.

Cat: Mouse, mouse come out of your house
And I will give you some bacon.

Mouse: Not I.

Cat: Mouse, mouse come out of your house
Or I will scratch your eyes out.

Mouse: You dare!

Then the cat starts chasing the mouse. The doors of the house open (the players lift their arms) when the mouse wants to run away from the cat, but they stay closed for the cat. The cat can only get into the house by trying to put his head and half his body, up to his waist, through the door (below the players' arms), and then he is allowed through.

Variations

* To help the cat, the house can have a magic 'golden door'. This is a door that will open once for the cat. (Then a new golden door is chosen.)

  I choose the child who is the magic door by winking at him. The cat must go round the circle trying to catch the mouse. Suddenly a magic door opens when the cat runs by, and the cat can run into the house!

* A dog can be introduced. He chases the cat, who is chasing the mouse. The dog begins inside the house with the mouse.

  The house always protects the weakest in a chase: so now the doors will open for the cat – but only when the dog is chasing him – as well as for the mouse.

Hint to the leader:

It is VERY IMPORTANT that the children stand in the circle with their feet together at all times. Otherwise the poor cat who is trying to put its head through a door may be injured by a kick or a knee.

Also, NEVER let the cat try and climb over a door (the arms of the children forming the house.) – he could easily fall and be tipped up onto his head, or injure his neck. I don't allow the cat (or dog) to charge at the house and forcefully break the grip of the players holding hands.

This game deals with inner and outer space: there is the space inside the circle (front space for the players forming the house, who face inwards) and there is the space outside the circle (backspace). The players forming the house have to be aware of where the cat is, and where the mouse is – even when they are outside the circle; this means they must be 'awake' to their backspace as well as to the space in front of them.

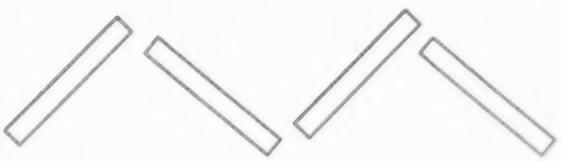
The children forming the house also have to be very quick to respond when a dog is introduced: they have to remember who is who, and who to let in (or out) so that the weaker animal is always protected. Lightning-quick thought is required!

This is one of the games I play to **counteract bullying:** here it is up to the group to *protect* the weakest: and the experience of being the dog, where the house is always acting against you no matter what you do, can be a powerful one.

110. WITCHES

Equipment: 4 benches

Play area:



'Once upon a time, in a country of many rivers, there lived an evil witch. Every day the people from the neighbouring village would go into the fields to care for their crops and herds, and the witch would lie and wait for them. As soon as they were in sight, she would chase them, hoping to catch one or two.

The people would run as fast as they could round the lakes towards the safety of their homes, with the witch hot on their heels. If the witch managed to catch someone, she put them into the closest river, until she could take them home to her cave in the mountains.

But the people were clever, they managed to salvage wood from the river; and they built bridges. When their friends and family were trying to escape from the witch, they were now able to cross the rivers using the bridges; but as everyone knows, witches can't cross water and the villagers were able to escape while the witch ran round the rivers.'

One child is the witch. The others are the villagers. The benches are the rivers. The children who are tipped, form bridges by standing on the benches and putting their arms on one another's shoulders.

The escaping villagers can run *beneath* the bridge's arms, using them as a short cut to escape from the witch who is chasing them. The witch is not allowed to cross the water by using one of the bridges, but she may reach through to the other side in order to try and make a tip.

Both the villagers and the witch are free to run around the rivers (the benches). If low-standing, sturdy gym benches are not available, you can mark out rivers using chalk on the floor or playground. On the grass you can use cones or even jumpers placed at each end of the river (about 4 paces long).

111. BLIND LION

Equipment: A lit candle and one 'treasure' for each child. (I try to find beautiful objects such as crystals, shells, carved wooden objects etc.) A scarf to use as a blindfold.

'Once upon a time a mighty lion lived in the jungle. Every day he would go hunting for treasures, and because he was the king of the jungle, he slowly gathered all the treasures from the villages around him. But eventually the lion grew old. Although he did not lose his courage, he began to go blind. When the children of the villages outside the jungle heard this, they began to steal into the jungle, to try and fetch their treasures back. But the old lion could hear very well, and still kept some of his old strength in the magic power of his paws. So when he heard a child approaching his cave, he used this magic by pointing at the child, and put a spell on her. Then the child would have to return the treasure and go back to the village outside the jungle. The blind lion's magic was so strong that even in the villages he could hear the children if they made too much noise, and could make them return the treasure if he pointed his magic paws at them.'

This game is played in complete silence. Choose one child to be the blind lion. She sits in the centre of the circle. Put the blindfold on the blind lion. Make sure her ears are not covered by the blindfold.

All the other children choose a treasure and hold it in their hands. They sit quietly in a large circle, about 10 paces from the blind lion.

As you are telling the story, collect the treasures from the children. Then place the treasures in a circle around the blind lion. Put the lit candle in front of the lion. The children must try to quietly steal their treasures back.

You must indicate who can begin to move towards the lion. No child may move until you have pointed at her. If the lion hears a child, he points to her and the child must go back to the circle line, until you tell her to start moving in again.

If the child manages to steal her treasure - but the lion points at her on her way back or when she is back in the circle, she must quietly walk back in and replace the treasure, then wait to be asked to try again.

To explain the rules, tell the children the story. The game ends when all the treasures have been taken back, and one child creeps in and blows out the candle.

Variations

* The children can be asked to bring a treasure from home, or a treasure may be sought in the garden or environment nearby.

* Before the game begins the children can choose someone to exchange treasures with. They now try to rescue a treasure for someone else.

* 'The lion and the thorntree' can be played, basically in the same way. This is more a difficult version, in which the blind lion is sitting under an imaginary thorntree. All the children are asked to remove one shoe and to place it in a circle around the lion. Sheets of newspaper are laid randomly within the circle. These are the thorns that prickle the children's feet and make a noise so the old lion can catch them out: the children must avoid the prickles.

* The game can be made even harder by placing each treasure directly on top of sheets of newspaper that are arranged in a circle around the lion, so that it has to be taken off with extreme care.

Inspired by Rudolf Kischnick

I play this game with 9 or 10 year olds, because this is when the children are beginning to realise that they are separate beings, that they can question the *authority* of teachers or parents. *Blind Lion* provides an image of how the teacher or leader of a group of children of this age may be feeling. Interestingly, it could also be seen as an image of the way the *child* feels. Without any need to address the issue directly, playing this game may help children feel more empathy towards the adult world; more importantly, though, it gives expression to a deep experience of loneliness and loss which they often now feel.

112. SHARKS AND OCTOPUSES

Play area:
25 paces long, 15 paces wide for 20 children.

One person is the shark. All the others start off as fishes. They stand at one end of the play area. The shark says **'Come little fishes swim in my ocean'**.

The fishes have to try to reach the other side without getting tagged by the shark. Once they leave the shore they have to continue to 'swim' to the other side. They may not run back to the safety of the bank they have just left behind

When they are at the other side of the sea they are safe. Each time the fishes wait until the shark says **'Come little fishes swim in my ocean'**. (It is important that they all swim in the same direction.) They have to leave the shore as soon as the shark has finished speaking.

If they are tagged, they sit *cross-legged* where they were caught, and become octopuses. (If they sit cross-legged they cannot lunge, and there is less chance of someone tripping over their legs and injuring themselves.)

An octopus can try to tag the fishes that are swimming past, but has to stay seated. The fishes who are tagged by an octopus also turn into octopuses. The shark tries to turn all the fishes into octopuses.

Variations

* You can introduce bits of 'wreckage' – a designated safe area. This may be a mat, a hoop or a tree, where 3 or so (decide on a number) fishes can shelter at one time from the shark. If more than the decided number of fishes shelter on the wreckage, the wreckage will sink.

* The shark may change the call to **'Come little fishes hop in my ocean'**. All the fish and the shark must now swim with a broken fin. This causes them to hop on one leg. Likewise she may substitute 'jump' or 'crawl' in her command rhyme.

Around the age of 9 years, children become more aware that life is like a perilous journey, full of pitfalls and obstacles. *At age 7, the children were presented with an obstacle outside themselves in the form of the swinging skipping rope – but that obstacle had a predictable rhythm, whereas the obstacles that are now perceived are less regular and far more chaotic.* At this stage one can feel confident in introducing games that require more demanding dodging and twisting – movements that are required by the fishes in *Sharks and Octopuses* when they try to escape the waving arms of the hungry octopuses.

Chasing games like these are also a metaphor for the natural expansion and contraction processes which govern our lives (for instance in breathing). When a 'fish' in *Sharks and Octopuses* reaches the opposite shore and is safe, she will naturally feel relief. On the other hand, when being pursued, she feels an inner contraction and tension.

113. DRAGON TAG

'In a far-away country lived a fierce dragon, who loved to eat children. She would leave her cave, in search of food; and when she caught a child, she would eat it, and grow larger. With each child she ate, she got larger and larger, until she was so big that her body stretched right across the land.'

Two players hold hands. They are the dragon. They secretly decide whom they will try to catch. The dragon catches a player by tipping – 'biting' her with its head (one end of the dragon), or by 'stinging' her with its tail (the other end).

When a player is caught, she joins the dragon by holding the hand of one of the players on the end of the chain. She is then allowed to choose the next victim.

The dragon must stay in one piece and not loosen her grip with the next person in the line. The game ends when everyone has joined the dragon or only one person remains uncaught.

Variations

114. DRAGON'S TEETH

Follow the rules for *Dragon Tag*. However, when the fourth person joins the dragon, it splits into two couples. (Or on the sixth tip, the dragon can split into two groups of three.)

115. BEAR TAG

The same rules apply: except instead of tipping a victim, the bear(-chain) must hold the victim in a bear hug for a count of three, without breaking.

Other variations

* Mark out areas where no-one may enter: e.g. swamps (see below). You can do this with hoops, ropes, gym equipment or even chalk marks on the floor.

* The runner may try to run 'between the bear's legs' (under the children's arms): but only when the bear is facing them. In this way children do not collide with each other because they may only run through in one direction. This will mean that the bear bunches up – which makes it harder for 'her' to tip.

* Instead of tipping or hugging, the dragon/bear must form a circle around the runner – who can try to escape through the closing gap in the circle.

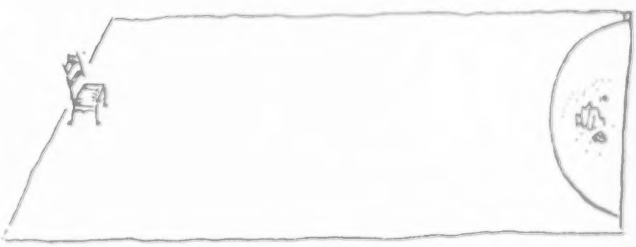
This game again explores the dynamic between the group and the individual – as the dragon or bear gets larger and larger, the individual has less and less chance of escaping; but at the same time the dragon becomes more clumsy, and all its 'legs' need to cooperate with each other!

I developed the bear variation in order to encourage the children in a particular class to make physical contact with one another, without being silly because of a premature interest in sex. This variation helps children realise that touching can be fun and non-sexual, that they can touch each other in a relaxed way.

116. THE MAGIC JEWELS, THE FIERY DRAGONS AND THE STONE KNIGHTS

Equipment: 3 objects that can be used as 'jewels', e.g. crystals, shells, stones.

Play area: Mark out the queen's castle (a stone, a chair etc.) at one end of the play area. At the other end, mark out the dragon's lair, by drawing a semi-circle about 5 paces from the centre, where the jewels will be placed.



One child is the queen (or king). She sits in her castle. Two children are the dragons. They have to try to stop the knights going into the lair and stealing the jewels. But the dragons have got so big that they cannot fit into the lair anymore, so have to stay outside the edge of their cave (outside the line of chalk).

The rest of the children are knights. They are in the castle. The game starts when the king or queen calls out, 'Knights, knights, rescue my jewels!' The knights charge towards the dragon's lair and try to capture the first jewel without getting tipped. Only one jewel can be taken at a time.

If the knight who has the jewel is tipped by a dragon on the way back to the castle, she gives the jewel to the dragon, who takes it back to her lair. The knight is now turned into stone.

When the first jewel has been successfully returned to the castle, the king or queen calls out: **'Stone Knights, Stone Knights, come back to me! The first jewel is rescued and you are free!'** The knights are freed and return to the castle. Then the queen says again: **'Knights, knights, rescue my jewels!'**, and the process begins again. The game ends when the three jewels have been returned to the castle.

Variations

* When the first jewel is captured, the stone knights are not freed. This helps if the children are becoming reckless in their charging at the castle.

* The jewels can be rescued in any order. However, the knight who has a jewel can restore life to a knight who has been turned to stone.

117. SLUGGABED

Equipment: Old mattress (or a strong woollen blanket, a carpet, a gym safety-mat. If you are using a blanket, tie 6 tennis balls around the edges, so that the children have some kind of handle to pull on). This is the 'bed'.

Play area: It is best to play this on a polished floor, so that the 'bed' can be safely and smoothly dragged.

Draw a large circle (the 'room') on the ground, around the 'bed'. The circle should be about 10 paces from the bed. On the bed Sleepy Head lies sleeping with her eyes closed. She has a helper, who sits on the bed next to her.
The object of the game is to drag Sleepy Head's mattress out of the room without getting tagged. When Sleepy Head wakes up she is grumpy, and from her bed tries to tag whoever is trying to steal it. But she is too sleepy to stand up. However her helper can run around and tag the other children.

The children wait in a large circle around the bed. As the verse is said they take one small step, heel to toe, for each line.

Sleepy head
Sleeps all day
Steal her bed
If you may!

On the last line they run in and try to drag the mattress to the line of the circle before getting tagged. The children are safe when they are not inside the 'room', but if they are tagged they have to sit out and wait for the next game. The game is over when either all the children are tagged or the bed is pulled over the line.

Variations

* You can vary the number of 'helpers'.
* Or, limit the amount of children who can steal into the room each time the verse is said.

Around the ages of 9 or 10, the children should begin to lose their dreaminess and wake up. *Sluggabed* is a metaphor for this waking process: the child on the bed has to be quick to tag the others, or else she will lose her bed.

Inspired by Rudolf Kischnick

118. CAT AND MOUSE HOUSE

Divide the children into pairs. Each child links arms with her partner. The pairs stand anywhere in the room or playground. These pairs are the 'mouse houses'.
Choose one child to be the cat, and another to be the mouse. The cat chases and tries to catch the mouse. The game begins with the cat saying:

> Mouse, mouse run into your house
> Or I will come in and eat you!

The mouse replies: **'Just try!'** and runs away from the cat. If the cat chases and catches the mouse, then the mouse changes into the cat and the cat becomes the new mouse. In other words they change roles. But the mouse can take refuge in a 'house' by linking arms with one child standing in a pair.

But the house is too small for three people, so the child at the other end of the house becomes a *cat*, and the *former cat miraculously turns into a mouse and has to run away as quickly as possible from the new cat.*

Variation
Instead of standing, the pairs of players forming the mouse-houses lie down on the grass. This gives the new mouse more chance to get away from the new cat, who has to stand up when the old cat lies down next to her house-partner.

Hints to the leader:

* Girls and boys at this age might object to standing in mixed pairs, with linked arms. You can tell them instead to stand with their legs apart, only touching the other child with one foot.

* Another problem you may experience is that some children are never chosen to become the cat. Halfway through the game, ask the children who haven't had a turn to put their hands up: the mouse must only choose those houses to hide in.

* Boys and girls will sometimes not choose each other, so you can introduce the rule that an escaping boy mouse must choose a girl house to run into.

The intention of the game is to help children learn to stay within themselves in moments of change or of panic (i.e. when a cat becomes a mouse). At such a moment, the tendency is to take fright and lose one's centre, and the capacity to think or act clearly.

Also, children at this age are often either too much out of themselves (tending towards aggression) or too much in themselves (passive, or introverted). For instance, Jane may start throwing herself around, verbally as well as physically, whereas Alice will simply lie on her bed all day and read. This game will help balance such tendencies. If Jane is too aggressive, and concentrates too much on chasing and catching the mouse, she will not be able to quickly change into a mouse and escape when she has caught the old mouse. On the other hand, Alice, the mouse, if she is too much in herself, will probably miss the opportunity to catch the new mouse when she changes into the cat.

These two tendencies are also related to our ability to plan ahead, to live into the future. To change roles so quickly requires a strong sense of self, which should be developing at this age. This game is also good for bullies and for children who lack a real sense of boundary, because it differentiates between your own and another's space. As a cat, your intention is to catch the mouse, and so you project yourself outwards, look out into the world. When you are a mouse, you tend to want to withdraw into yourself – and if you then have to change roles, you will probably take too long, in which case the new mouse will have run away.

Ghost Train

*These games are examples of the **nine year-old threshold** of leaving the dreamy world of early childhood and embarking on the path of middle childhood. Of course, this threshold is approached over a period of time – roughly two years – which may mean the child reaches it when she is older than nine. Yet all children experience this change. To the outsider (parent, teacher, friend) this may be indicated by an outward show of independence: for instance, if an adult now makes a mistake, the child notices and may well take great delight in teasing her about it. Or this change may be shown more inwardly – for example, with an expressed desire to achieve things without ANY help whatsoever.*

The reaching and crossing of the threshold towards a more individual, independent state, is often a painful process. If this crisis in the child is met with sensitivity and understanding, she can grow tremendously. The nine year-old requires obstacles to overcome in order to test and strengthen her emerging sense of self. But the adult who takes the child's show of independence as something that challenges authority, may respond with reactionary, self-protective gestures which both inhibit the child's passage and also distort it. Instead of a dictator, an absolute authority who bars the way, the nine year-old needs a benevolent guardian who encourages her development towards selfhood.

This is something of a 'preview' of the role the adult will need to play when dealing with adolescents. In the twelve year old, for instance, barring the path towards independence can lead to a distorted independence in the late teens: no real independence at all, but a reliance on peer-group support (e.g. in gangs). During adolescence, however, the test is more orientated towards conditional versus unconditional love, unconditional love being an essential foundation-stone for building relationships with them. When adult caring is dispensed as a reward for the perceived good behaviour of a teenager, this can make her very insecure.

At nine years of age, learning through imitation is not as strong as it was before. Children start to learn more through observing.

The nine year-old child begins to wake up to herself in a new way; then, in the following year, begins to test and try out her emerging powers. She starts to experience a confrontation with the forces which connect her to the physical world.

119. GHOST TRAIN

'All the children in the village are asleep in their beds. The Ghost Queen comes to the village to steal the children, and to keep them as prisoners on her 'Ghost Train'.

The children kneel in a circle with their eyes closed. One person is the Ghost Queen or King. As the Ghost Queen silently walks around the outside of the circle of 'sleeping' children, she says or sings the following verse:

> The Ghost Queen walks and none can hear
> The midnight hour it strikes so clear
> Rise up, rise up – not slow, not fast,
> Be careful not to be the last.

She touches a child gently on the shoulder, who rises and joins the Ghost Train, by holding the hand of the last person on the 'Train' in perfect silence. The Ghost Queen keeps repeating the verse. Each child who joins the enchanted train also joins in singing the song. The last child in the train always wakes up the next one while the whole train proceeds and secretly winds around the houses of the village.

And so it continues, with the verse repeated over and over again, until one child remains. If this child 'wakes up' (opens her eyes) before the Ghost Train has circled around her twice and is led out of the 'ghost door' (a prearranged place about 10 paces away), then all the children are freed from the train – and there is great rejoicing.

If she doesn't wake up in time, the Ghost Queen keeps all the children in her power, so this child, too, joins the train: the Ghost Queen has won the game.

However, if a sleeper feels that she may be the last person left and opens her eyes only to discover that she is not the last, (i.e. there are others who have not yet joined the train who are still sleeping in the circle) then she is also captured by the Ghost Queen and must now join the train.

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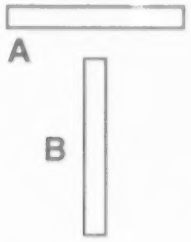
120. JACK IN A BOX

Equipment: two playballs, four benches

Begin with three benches: arranged in a T-shape.



One child (player A) stands on bench A – she has the ball. The other children stand on bench B, all facing player A.

Player A throws the ball to player 1, who throws it back to her. Player 1 then crouches down. Player A then throws the ball to player 2, over player 1's head. Player 2 throws it back and crouches down.

This continues until the last player in the line (say, player 14) catches the ball and throws it back. Then player 1 moves to bench A, and player A goes to the end of the line.

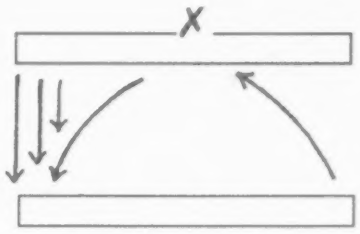
Variation 1

Divide the children into two teams. Now two 'T' shapes are formed with the benches. Each team has a ball and the procedure is followed again.

Variation 2

121. CANYONS

The benches are placed parallel.



Again player A throws to each of the players in turn. When the last player has caught and returned the ball, all the players hop off the bench and move it 1 foot (30cm) further away from bench A.

Then player 1 becomes player A, and the child who was player A now goes to the end of the line.

This is such a simple and organised way to practise accurate throwing and catching! (Even though on paper it sounds so complicated.) The player on bench A has a chance to throw the ball over an increasing distance. To be able to do this means that the child needs to estimate the distance each time. The fact that players are standing on a bench means that there is little margin for error when the ball is thrown – if it is too far to the right or left the players will not be able to catch it.

122. RIVER BANDITS

Play area:
The play area should be about 15 paces by 10 paces. Mark out two 'river banks' across the width of the area, about 3 or 4 paces apart. This forms the river. It should divide the playing area in half.

'There was once a man who lived in a faraway country. He decided one day that the time had come for him to go and seek his fortune. So he joined the rest of the travellers who were travelling towards the East. Eventually they came to a brown and fast-flowing river. Now, it was said that there were some boats on this river that were ferried by honest ferrymen, and others that were rowed by bandits. Some travellers had been caught by the bandits and made to serve them by robbing honest travellers.

It was said that the best time to cross the river was early in the morning before the bandits had woken up: for if you waited too long the noonday sun would shine, the river would rise, and the bandits would approach the bank in search of slaves ...'

One person is a boat. A smaller person climbs on her back and is the bandit. The other children are travellers. They try to cross the river without getting tipped by the bandit or her boat.

The travellers start crossing only when the bandit says, **'Come and try to cross the river!'** Once they have begun to cross the river, the travellers cannot turn back. If one gets tipped, they become a boat or a bandit, (depending on their size). They go to the side of the play area, and wait for a partner.

The bandits and boats cannot go beyond the banks of the river; but when the last traveller is left on the banks of the river, it floods, and the bandits on their boats can go beyond the river bank to catch the last traveller.

When the traveller is caught, or has successfully reached the village on the opposite bank, the river subsides, and the bandits return with the river to its original course. The bandits then call their challenge again. The game ends when two or three travellers are left.

This game works primarily with images. The children at this age are awakening to a new consciousness; the new experience of being separate opens them to both positive and negative forces. But the negative forces now seem to threaten them from without – and are therefore terrifying in a new way. Such external forces cannot so easily be conquered or tamed: and the child can experience the confrontation with them in a very strong way. In *River Bandits,* we have a picture of this kind of experience. The rich image of the river, a symbol of change in both psychology and mythology, reflects the child's changing reality. The negative forces are symbolised by the image of the bandits on their boats, who chase the child while she tries to pass through a state of change. But these dark forces are encumbered and slow in movement, which enables the quick child to pass safely through their territory. But if a child is hesitant in taking on the challenge – if she hesitates too long before trying to cross the river – the dark forces are freed, and can engulf her. This can bring a realisation that life's dangerous course must be embarked upon, that delaying the journey does nothing to help conquer the dangers. If one acts too impulsively, though, one may also be caught.

123. SCARECROWS

One person is the farmer. The farmer is trying to grow corn, but there is a flock of crows (the rest of the children) who keep on eating it. So the farmer chases the crows and tries to catch them.

If the crows get caught, they magically turn into scarecrows, and stand with their legs apart, arms outstretched. The scarecrows can be freed by any of the crows, who have to crawl between the scarecrow's legs. While they are beneath the scarecrow, they are safe from the farmer. But as soon as the crow leaves the safety of the scarecrow, they are both in danger of being tipped.

Variation
Slowly add more farmers.

This is another traditional game which illustrates how the rules of play can be given to children in picture form. This is not just a more fanciful way of describing rules; in fact, developing the imagination has a great pedagogical task in child development. Through the imagination, children develop the ability to think and to reason – not in a dry, linear way, but creatively. Skills like problem-solving are nourished by developing imaginative thinking.

124. SHELTER, WATER, FOOD

Play area: About 25 x 18 paces.

Divide the group into two teams. One group will be 'nature'. The other group will be the 'animals'. The two groups go to the opposite end of the playing area. The 'animals' turn their backs away from 'nature' so they cannot see them. 'Nature' stays facing the 'animals'. Each player in both groups now chooses one of three signs to make with her hands.

1. Shelter: This is made by placing the finger tips of your hands together above your head. This shape resembles the sloping roof of a house.

2. Water: This is made by making a cup with your hands and holding them out in front of yourself.

3. Food: This is signalled by simply holding your stomach with both hands.

On a call given by the game leader all the 'animals' turn around. They must run and tip one of the 'nature' players who is making the same sign as themselves. The 'nature' player may only be tipped by one animal. If an animal is successful she takes the nature player back with her to where she started. The 'nature' player now becomes an 'animal'. If an 'animal' is not successful in being the first to tip a 'nature' making the same sign as herself, she joins the 'nature' group.

This process is repeated over and over again until either one group has no players left or, after a set length of time, the game is stopped and the number of players on each side counted. The team with the most players wins.

Chapter 6
Age 10 - 11

125. THE DOG AND HIS BONE

Equipment: a short stick or a ball, two benches

Play area:

The players are hungry dogs, who want to get to the 'bone' (the stick or ball) as quickly as possible.

Divide the players into two teams. Each team sits on a bench. Number the players on each team, e.g. Player 1, Player 2 etc. The leader begins the game by calling out a number, say **'Five!'** Players 5 from both teams race to pick up the bone.

The player who picks it up first, chases the other player with the stick and tries to tag him. If he is successful, the tagged player joins his team. The team with the most players at the end of a set time wins.

126. SHARK'S JAWS

Equipment: up to 18 wooden staffs

Two players face each other and kneel on the floor. Between them are two staffs. They hold the staffs between their thumbs and forefingers in such a way as to prevent them getting squashed!

The wooden staffs are the jaws of the shark, and they open and shut. (They are moved together and apart by the kneeling pair.)

The rest of the players have to brave the shark's jaws. They line up at one end of the play area, and approach the jaws. They must step in and out of them without being 'eaten'.

A second set of jaws can be introduced about one small pace away from the first set. Continue adding more and more jaws.

Variation

Two pairs sit facing each other with their staffs between them. Again, they open and shut the jaws. The players take it in turns to nimbly step in and out of the jaws, from one corner at a time.

The following verse is said:

North, South, East, West
Put your foot in, do your best.
If the trap closes tight
You will scream all through the night!

This is a game requiring daring and courage. Ten year-olds love a challenge and danger: *Shark's Jaws* is both! The players need agility more than strength to be successful.

127. FIRE AND ICE

Playing field: Approx 25 x 15 paces

'In a far-away land lived two different peoples: those who had fire, and those who had ice. They wished to meet each other and share their fire and ice with one another, but between them lived a giant who didn't want them to work together. When he saw two travellers moving towards each other, he would step between them, and try to catch them by chasing one or the other. However, if the travellers managed to reach each other and touch, their magic was stronger than the giant, and they were free. The traveller who carried ice then went to the land of fire, and the traveller who carried fire went to the land of ice.'

Divide the children into two teams: one represents fire, the other ice. The fire-group stands in a line on one side of the play area. The ice-group stands in a line on the opposite side.

One child is the giant. He stands in the centre and calls out:

> Fire and Ice, come to me!
> Fire and Ice, touch and be free!

Fire and ice try to touch each other without being tipped by the giant. If they are successful, ice joins the fire-group and fire goes to the ice-group.

If the giant manages to tip one of the runners (for instance ice), that runner becomes the new giant, and the other traveller (fire) returns to the group he came from. The old giant now joins the ice-group. If the giant fails to catch anyone after three goes, a new giant is chosen.

Variation

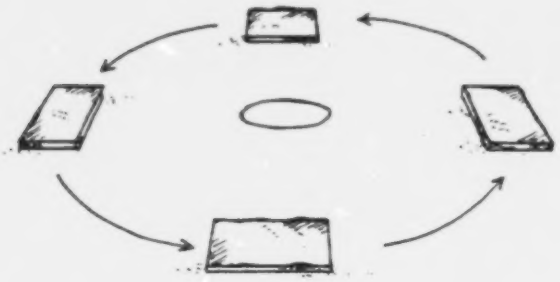
Add the lands of earth and wind. Now there are four travellers coming from four directions. They try to meet – but if two are together and the giant chases them, they can split apart again in order to run faster.

This game focuses on the dynamic between the group (the different travellers) and the individual (represented by the giant). Many social situations are reflected while playing *Fire and Ice*: the lone individual working against others; the benefits of cooperation and social interaction. The giant represents the individual who is too selfish, who only wants to exist for himself and doesn't want anyone else to live in his environment. The fire- and ice-groups represent friendship; and it is interesting to watch which children try to help each other, and which are more like the giant – even when they are supposed to be working with a partner! This is also a game that is good for groups in which there is an element of bullying – being the lone giant in the centre of a huge space, while four other people work together to thwart you, is not so easy to bear!

128. MACPHERSON

MacPherson is a game that requires children to keep listening and be attentive, no matter what else they are doing.

Equipment: Lay out four mats, or draw four single bed-sized areas on the ground. These are houses. In the centre of the circle created by the mats is the giant's pot (another mat).



'Near a small village once lived a fierce giant called MacPherson. He delighted in catching the village children when they were playing in the streets of their village.

So the villagers erected a wooden tower, and a watchman was hired to warn the children when the giant was approaching. But even though the children ran as quickly as they could into the safety of their homes, the giant always managed to catch the last and slowest child. He would put this child into his pot to cook him for supper. Sometimes the watchman would see if the children were listening out for him, and he would shout "Mac...aroni" or "Mac...Donald." Then the children would laugh at him, but continue playing in the streets.'

The children run round the outside of the houses in their village (the mats). The leader is the watchman who looks out for the giant's approach. When he sees him, he shouts out **'MacPherson!'** Then all the children try to hide in the safety of a house. However, the last child who tries to run into a house is out. He is put into the 'pot' in the centre of the village.

Sometimes the man in the watch tower makes sure that the children are listening for his warning cry, and tests them by shouting out other words or names that sound like MacPherson such as **'Mac... aroni!'** or **'Mac... Peersing!'** If a child runs into a house then, he must also go into the giant's pot. The children are never allowed to run back – they must go into the house ahead of them.

When there are fewer children left, the giant gets excited, and knocks down some of the houses. (Then I change one or two of the mats into jumps – by folding them in half. This means there are fewer houses in which to take refuge.) The children in the pot watch out to see which of the runners is last into a house.

Variations

* While the children are running, they can try to tip whoever is in front of them. But at the same time they must make sure they take refuge in a house as quickly as possible when **'MacPherson!'** is called.

* When the guard in the watch tower shouts **'Change!'**, all the children must change direction. (This is to give Amy, who always gets caught, a chance to catch Ben who is 'hot on her tail'.)

This is a variation of a very common form of running game, where there is a 'safe' area (e.g. in musical chairs). But in this chasing game, where the pursuer is invisible, the children are asked to move as quickly as possible when a certain word is said. In order to both run (chasing and being chased) and listen, the child must concentrate and be 'in' themselves, in a similar way to *Cat and Mouse House.*

By Graham Whiting

129. ALLEY CAT

One child is the cat. Another child is a mouse. The other players form the walls or pillars of alleyways by standing in 4 or more lines of 3 or more players (see picture, below). Each player must be able to touch fingertips with both people next to him, and, if he turns 90 degrees, also those two in front and behind him. Make sure the 'walls' are straight and aligned.

The mouse begins in the alley. The other players form the alleys by holding their arms outstretched. The **cat** begins by saying:

> Mouse, mouse come out of your house
> And I will give you some cheese.

Mouse: Not I.

Cat: Mouse, mouse come out of your house
And I will give you some bacon.

Mouse: Not I.

Cat: Mouse, mouse come out of your house
Or I will scratch out your eyes.

Mouse: You dare!

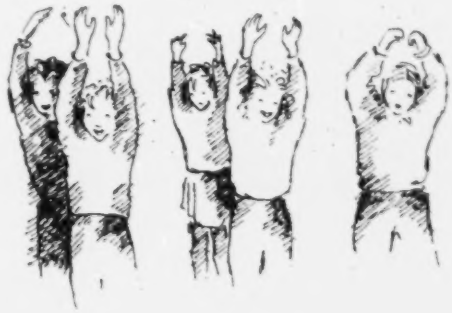
Then the cat starts chasing the mouse down the alleys, trying to catch him. Neither the cat nor the mouse is allowed to go beneath the players' outstretched arms.

When the leader calls out **'Walls!'** the players turn 90 degrees and form walls. Now the cat and mouse run in a new direction.

The leader can also call out **'Pillars!'** The children who were walls or alleys now become pillars by dropping their arms to their sides. (This helps the cat to get nearer the mouse!)

To give the cat an even better chance, call out **'Stumps!'** – the players now crouch down, and the cat can reach over them to tip the mouse.

It is also nice to have **'Towers'** – the children stand with their arms raised vertically.



When the mouse is caught, (or you feel the cat needs a rest!) a new cat and mouse are chosen and the game begins again.

This is a good example of how the concept of one game (e.g. *Cat and Mouse*) can be developed to meet the changing needs of growing children. Instead of playing in a circle, the players now form straight rows. This means that they can no longer

rely on the group (e.g. as part of a circle), but have to take individual responsibility for their place in the line. It is best if the leader encourages them to readjust their own walls or alleyways, so that they have the feeling that it's 'up to them'. If you allow children to put their hands on their neighbours' shoulders instead of touching with fingertips, this changes the game, and becomes more of a group activity again.

I have found it fascinating to observe that before the age of 10 or so, children find it extremely difficult to consciously raise their arms horizontally. It would be more difficult for an 8 or 9 year-old to *move* this horizontal plane through space (e.g. 90 degrees to the left). *Alley Cats* also introduces the element of geometry in games: this is picked up again in *Running the Gauntlet* (Chapter 9) and *Coupe* (Chapter 10).

130. SEVEN STARS

I discovered the following game in a dusty rural village in Vietnam. It is a wonderfully simple, and very exciting game.

Equipment: 7 large tins and one soft playing ball. If necessary, use a tennis ball (see 'Equipment' in the Introduction).

Play area: Draw a circle about 4 or 5 paces across. Draw a line about 7 paces from the circle.

Divide the players into two teams. Team A builds a tower in the middle of the circle, using the seven tins – any shape or design they choose. Team A's aim is to prevent team B rebuilding the tower.
Team B watches and notes exactly what the tower looks like (they will have to rebuild it in exactly the same design.) Team B's aim is to build the tower without being branded. Team B stands behind the line and one by one tries to knock down the tower with the ball.

If the whole team have a turn, but do not succeed in knocking down the tower, the teams swap over, and team A stands behind the throwing line and tries to knock down the tower they built, with the ball.

If more than 3 tins are knocked down, team B rushes forward and begins to rebuild the tower. Team A, however, tries to prevent them rebuilding the tower by branding them (team B) with the ball.

Players on team A are allowed to pass the ball between them, but are not permitted to run with the ball.

When a member of Team B is branded, he sits out. Children in Team A must not hit the tower while trying to brand team B. If they do so, team B wins. If the tower is rebuilt team B wins; but if all the players are out before they can rebuild it, then team A wins.

Then the teams swap over, and the game begins again.

An optional rule:
Players are only allowed to brand another player below the waist.

At this age, children have to strive to find the balance between their inner experience and what occurs in the world beyond them. For instance, in *Seven Stars,* Benny may be so inwardly absorbed with rebuilding the tower, that he forgets to dodge the ball – and is branded time and time again. The motif of creating and destroying is also emphasised in this game. The players find that it is easy to destroy the tower, but to rebuild it takes courage, perseverance, inner calmness and self-control in the face of adversity.

131. SHIPWRECKS

Equipment:
- Six pieces of gym equipment. These are bits of the shipwreck, floating in the sea. For instance, box, mat, springboard, horse. Or use furniture such as bench, table, bed, mattress, etc. If playing outdoors, use logs, rocks, trees etc.
- Up to three different colours of vest, sash or headband to identify the 'shark(s)'.
- A plastic hoop.

One child is a shark. (Increase the number of sharks as you feel the need.) In the ocean, a ship has been blown up, and there are bits of wreckage floating around. The crew are swimming in the ocean (i.e. running between the pieces of gym equipment or logs etc.) But there is a shark who tries to catch them.

The swimmers are only safe if they are on a piece of wreckage – the shark will catch them if they leave any part of their body in the water (e.g. by the foot). If the shark catches a swimmer, then he becomes the new shark.

Variations

* Only two swimmers at any time are allowed on each piece of wreckage – otherwise it will sink. When a third swimmer comes along, one of the others must dive into the ocean and make room for him. If there are more than two swimmers on a piece of wreckage, the shark can catch one or all of them.

* With more than one shark, swimmers are held prisoner in the sharks' lair. (I use a plastic hoop for the sharks' lair – the prisoners must, at all times have at least one foot in this hoop, until they are freed.)

* Swimmers are freed by being taken by the hand by a swimmer, who must be careful not to be tipped while doing so, and led back to the safety of one of the pieces of shipwreck. If either is tagged while doing this, both become prisoners.

* Only one prisoner can be freed at a time. The swimmer must return to a piece of wreckage before freeing another prisoner.

* It is good if one shark swims around catching swimmers in the ocean, while the other shark guards the prisoners from being freed.

* If you wish to control the rate of freeing, and slow it down, a rule can be introduced: a swimmer must, in life-saver fashion, let the prisoner cling to his back (a 'piggy-back' rescue) as he runs for safety.

Children love to play this game. Some children will not budge from the wreckage (the place of safety); often it will be the melancholic child who hardly ever gets caught because he waits and watches the shark, and then chooses the moment of greatest safety before running to the next wreckage. This may, of course, become slightly boring for him – but the game itself will allow him to be more courageous. If the leader forces such a child to take more risks, this can make him more cautious and timid; the impulse is coming from an external source. It is far better if he learns to modify his own behaviour through inner motivation, through a desire to enter into the game.

132. HOUNDS, HARES AND HUNTERS (1)

Equipment: one soft ball

One person has the ball (the gun). He is the hunter. The other children are hares, and run away from the hunter and his 'gun'.

The hunter shoots his gun (throws the ball) at the hares, but because his gun is too heavy, he cannot run with it. He has to 'shoot' from a standing position. If a hare is hit by the gun's bullet, he must sit cross-legged on the ground.

Once a hare is sitting down, he can help the hunter by catching and throwing the ball to him. (This means that the hunter is now freer to move closer to the hares he is chasing.) The game ends when the hunter has killed all but two of the hares.

133. HUNTER AND HARES (2)

Equipment: one soft ball

One person has the ball (the gun). He is the hunter. The other children are hares, and run away from the hunter and his 'gun'.

The hunter shoots his gun at the hares, but cannot run with it. He can, however, throw the ball up into the air in the direction he wishes to go, and run to where he can catch it. He must do this by throwing the ball above his head, at least 10 foot (3 metres) in the air and catching it before it hits the ground. If a hare is hit by the gun, he must sit cross-legged on the ground. The game ends when the hunter is too tired, or has injured most of the hares.

The sitting hares are freed if
- a running hare catches the ball after the hunter throws it into the air, or
- a running hare can pick up the ball from the ground, and try to free the sitting hares by branding the hunter.

134. HUNTERS, HARES AND HOUNDS (3)

Equipment: one soft ball

Whoever has the ball (the gun) is the hunter. He starts the game by throwing and trying to brand a hare. The hunter is not allowed to run with the gun at any time.

The other children are hares, and run away from the hunter and his 'gun'. If a hare is hit by the gun, he must sit cross-legged on the ground.

Any person may pick up the ball. He then becomes the new hunter. The person attempting to pick up the ball must do so cleanly, without fumbling it and dropping it on the ground.

A sitting hare can free himself by
- reaching out and tipping a running hare. The running hare who was tipped must now sit down, and the sitting hare is free, or
- trying to brand a running hare, or
- catching the ball as it falls. Then the thrower becomes a sitting hare, and the catcher is free to run again.

A running hare can free the sitting hares by either
- catching the ball on the full, when the hunter throws it into the air, or
- by picking up the ball from the ground, and branding the hunter.

The sitting hares can throw the ball amongst themselves if they wish.

Variation

The hunter can pass the ball deliberately to a sitting hare, who must pass it back to the hunter. If he brands a hare on the next throw, the one he brands must sit down while the sitting hare who passed the ball back to him goes free.

135. BANDITS

Equipment: 4 - 5 gym floor-mats, 2 crash-mats, 3 vaulting box-tops or similar. (If none of this is available then improvise with other objects, even chalk marks on the floor will do.)
2-3 coloured vests.

Playing area:
35 x 25 paces for a group of 25 players.

The field is set out with a crash-mat or a marked area of about 9 x 4 yards (8 x 3.5m), at either end of the space. These are the 'bandits' prison' and the 'village'. A river is laid or marked out, about 2-3 paces wide, floor mats across the whole width in the middle of the field of play. Place the three box-tops or mark out three bridges evenly spaced across the river.

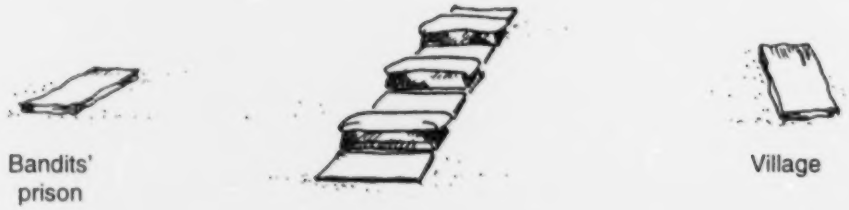
Two to three bandits are chosen. They put on the coloured vests. To start with these bandits stand near the village. The rest of the players, the 'villagers', stand in the bandits' prison.

The aim of the game is for the bandits to try and capture all the villagers. The game leader then begins the game by releasing all the villagers from the prison. They will attempt to cross the river using the bridges, and get back to safety in their village. The bandits will try to prevent this by tipping as many of the villagers as they can.

If a villager is tipped, he must place his hands on his head and go straight to prison. He can be released from the prison if one of the free villagers rescues him by running over the bridge and up to the prison, taking him by the hand and leading him back to the bridge. If either is tipped by a bandit while doing this, then they both become prisoners. Once on a bridge, the escaping and the free villager may let go hands and try to get back to the village separately.

A free villager may only take one prisoner at a time. No-one may jump over the river. The bridge is the only way to cross.

The game ends when either all the villagers have been caught or after a set length of time the game is halted and the number of captured villagers is counted. If more are captured than are free, the bandits win. Or vice-versa.



136. DRAGON FIRE

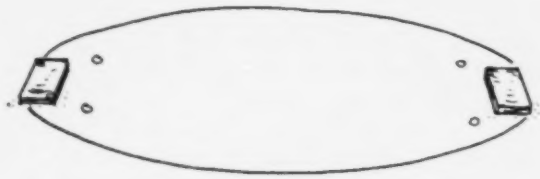
(a version of *Waking and Sleeping*)

Dragon Fire (like its sister, *Waking and Sleeping*) is a game that requires self-confidence on the part of the leader – you need to have eyes everywhere when this game is being played; it has great potential for team strategy, but can also quickly spiral into chaos – especially if the leader is at all unfocused or has had a late night!

Equipment:

Two floor mats (or two marked areas, 3 x 5 paces): these are the dragons' caves.

4 - 6 balls (or beanbags): these are the fires.



Divide the children into 2 teams. Explain the rules using the following images:

'There once lived a dragon in a cave. He was known as the Red Dragon, because of the colour of his scales. In order to keep alive, he had to have enough fire to eat. But he was lazy, so he got his dragon children to keep two fires tended outside his cave at all times. Sometimes the fires were small and weak, and then the dragon sent his children to steal fire from his brother, the Black Dragon, who lived on a neighbouring mountain. However, the brother also needed fire, and he sent his own dragon-children to steal the Red Dragon's fire, by roaring ***"Dragon Fire!"***

Now because the dragon children also needed fire to give them strength, they were not able to venture far or for long periods from the cave – the longer they stayed away from the cave, the weaker they became.'

The basic rule of this game is: whoever runs into the field later than the opponent has 'more fire' and has the right to tag. Only two players are allowed on the field at any one time.

To start, one player from team A runs towards team B's fire when the leader calls **'Dragon Fire!'** He either tries to steal a fire (e.g. the ball, or beanbag), or acts as a bait to player B, who has more 'fire' and so can tip him, because player B left his cave later than player A.

Player A can run back to the cave, and tip the next player in line – who now has more fire than player B, so player B must retreat.

If a player is tipped, he goes back to his own cave, and joins the back of the line. If he has a 'fire' in his possession when tipped, he first returns it to where he got it. A player who successfully tips another, carries on tipping.

The game is won when a team has stolen the fires of the other team.

Variations

* Instead of a player returning to the cave when tipped, tipped players can go out into prison. When all players in a team are imprisoned, the other team has won.

* When a player is successful and tips another player, he returns to the cave and is allowed another turn to go out and try to steal the fire. (But he is only allowed to go out three times in a row.)

Hints to leader:

- For children who don't want to return to the cave, but who are never tipped, introduce the rule that after a count of 10 or 20 their fire is burnt out.
- To encourage quick changing of players, and to de-emphasize the chase, tell a player with more fire to leave the cave as soon as possible after the player on the opposite team (who has less fire) has left his cave.
- Position yourself at one end of the play area, so that you can see as much as possible of what's going on.
- If the game becomes 'bogged down' and no team is having much success in stealing the fire, place the fires, (the balls) progressively further away from the teams. This means it is easier to steal them.

Dragon Fire is a game of daring and courage. Children at this age love games that require them to go through a trial. Also, at this age, factions begin to show themselves: the children are reassessing friendships and loyalties. This game deals with the individual and the group.

137. GIANTS, KNIGHTS AND FARMERS

Although the next game is ideal for 11 year olds, it can also be played with children of mixed ages, 7 - 16. I have played this game very successfully at a Michaelmas festival, with about 150 children, with the teachers acting as 'referees'. It was great fun. Remember to introduce a game like this in story-form; at the Michaelmas festival, I emphasised the aspect of courage, of the community working together against the enemy, and of the harvest.

'In a far-away land, it is harvest time. The farmers have worked hard all year to produce the golden grain, which they have just harvested. Not far away is a castle where a host of knights live. Although they are brave and courageous, they are no good at growing food. So they have reached an agreement with the farmers (children at this age love deals!)*: if the farmers give them grain, then the knights will protect their fields from the giants who roam the land.*

So the farmers start dragging a big sack of grain from their village towards the knights' castle. But between the village and the castle is Giant Land. The giants are afraid of the knights on their flashy horses, and they know that the knights will starve if they don't get the grain from the farmers – then the giants would rule the land. So the giants try to stop the farmers taking grain to the knights, by catching them and clubbing them. To do this, a giant must 'club' a farmer twice in quick succession. When a farmer has been clubbed, he goes to the edge of Giant Land.

The knights try to protect the farmers from the giants. They can capture a giant by pursuing him and pulling off his hat, which robs him of all power. The giant may now be taken back to the castle and held prisoner.'

Equipment:
For the farmers: a sack filled with something heavy (pebbles or sand) not easy for the children to lift, but possible to drag.
For the giants: 'clubs' made from loosely knotted veils or scarves. Hats, one for each giant

Play area:
For a group of 25 children at least 30 x 25 paces. A gym or grassy area is best as there is sometimes some falling over.

Divide the children into giants, farmers, knights and knights' horses. With a group of 25 players, 5 can be giants, 8 farmers, 6 knights and 6 horses. The knights should be smaller children, the horses the larger ones. (If playing with mixed ages, the giants can be 13 or 14 year-olds, the farmers 11 - 12 year-olds, and the knights the 9 - 10 year-olds.)

The giants can wear knitted caps (made in the hand-work lesson), where all their power is stored. If the knights' horses get weary, they have to return to their castle to rest – that's where they are safe.

The end of the game com[illegible]en everyone has collapsed in laughter, or better still, when the grain has reached the castle! Alternatively, the game can end when half the farmers, or half the giants, have been killed or captured. This latter rule is especially useful when playing with large numbers.

At this age, the children are awakening to a new social awareness of the rights and strengths of the individual and of the group. They become aware that anti-social forces try to prevent justice happening (the giants); and that to be social (take grain to feed the knights) requires courage to face the risk of paying too high a price (being clubbed).

For example, some children-farmers stick closely to a knight – they do not take any more risks than they have to, but at the same time limit their effectiveness; they are therefore putting personal safety above the social task – and this can go as far as an obsession with not being caught (but these tactics will never win the game).

On the other hand, some children-farmers sacrifice themselves too easily for the social task – they will try to distract the giants' attention away from the corn – but then the sack doesn't get moved at all! A similar pattern can be seen with the knights: some are brave and go out to get the giants – but forget to protect the corn (and the poor farmers). Sometimes a group of knights will surround the corn – which makes it impossible for the giants, and holds up the game. (In this case you can introduce a rule that only one knight can protect the grain.)

Inspired by Rudolf Kischnick

The next three games can be played as a preparation for volleyball.

138. FIRST AID or MEDICINE MAN

Equipment: 5-6 floor mats or blankets.
1-2 coloured vests.
Drum or bell

Play area: 25 x 20 paces for 25 players.

Number of players: 10 upwards.

'On a battle-field some of the warriors have been injured by a mighty chief who is their enemy. They are unable to walk. The warriors' friends see this and go to their rescue. They do this by carrying the wounded back to a tent where they are healed and may again go out to challenge the mighty chief. However, the mighty chief will try to stop the warrior reaching the tent by chasing away any helpers. If he catches any of them, they too will be wounded and fall to the ground, where they will have to await rescue.'

Choose one or two mighty chiefs who wear the vests. Spread the mats, blankets or chalk marks around the playing area. These are the healing tents.

The game begins with all the warriors asleep lying on the ground. A bell rings or a drum beats to wake up the warriors to tell them that the mighty chief has come into their land. They are powerless to fight him and must wake up and run away, trying to avoid being tipped by him.

If they are tipped they fall to the ground. Other warriors who are not yet wounded may try to rescue the wounded by carrying them to the mat. If, in doing so, any of the carriers are caught by the chief, then they too must fall down. If they succeed in reaching the mat then the wounded warrior may re-enter the battle.

The game ends when
- the mighty chief has caught and wounded all the warriors and no-one is left to make any rescues
- or a prearranged number of warriors (perhaps 12) have been caught and healed.

A warrior can only be healed once. If he is wounded again he must leave the playing area and wait until the next game. In this way the game is played until only one warrior is left. He is made the next mighty chief or may be given an extra life the next time this game is played.

As related by Rob Sim

The following games are aimed more at players of **11 years and older.**

139. NEWCOMBE

Equipment: a slightly deflated volleyball

Play area: a volleyball court and low-set net; or a badminton court and net

Divide the players into two teams, one team on either side of the net. The ball is thrown over the net by team A. Team B tries to catch the ball on the full, and throws it back. The ball is allowed to touch the net as long as it lands in the opposing court. If the ball is thrown out of the court or into the net, or dropped, a point is awarded to the opposing team, and they get to 'serve' (throw) the ball over to restart the game. A team may win a point regardless of whether they served or not (unlike real volleyball). The first team to reach 10 points wins.

140. BLANKET BALL

Equipment: a volleyball, a double woollen blanket

Number of players: 10 - 15

Each player takes hold of the edge of the blanket and stretches it tight. The volleyball is placed in the middle. The players toss the ball into the air by slackening and tightening the tension of the blanket, and moving their arms upward. The players try to get the ball into the air as many times as possible without it touching the ground.

Variations

* There are two blankets and two teams. Give the teams three minutes to see how many throws and catches to themselves they can do.
* The teams try to throw and catch the ball between the two blankets as many times as possible.
* The two teams stand either side of the volleyball net and see if they can throw the ball, using the blanket, over to the other side, where the other team will try to catch it.

ROUNDERS

The most successful way to introduce rounders to ten to eleven year olds is to call on the children's imagination, using a theme and images. In preparatory games for rounders, I use the image of trains and stations; I have found that when I don't use a pictorial introduction, the children often become agitated, argumentative and sullen.

Working with images, however, offers a way for all ability groups to enter fully into the spirit of rounders – which demands courage, timing and quick thinking.

141. CLOCKS

Equipment: 1 ball, as for rounders

Divide the group into two teams. Team A forms a clock by standing in a large circle. Team B line up next to the clock. They take it in turns to run around the outside of the clock as quickly as possible. When they have circled the clock once they tip the next runner.

Team A has the ball. They throw the ball from one player to the next in the circle as quickly as possible. The leader counts how many 'ticks' (catches) the clock makes, until the last runner reaches the end of his run. Then the teams swap over. The team with the least 'ticks' against them wins.

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142. TRAINS AND STATIONS

Play area: 4 bases placed (or marked) in a diamond shape: 12 -20 paces apart

Equipment:
- A slightly deflated mini play-ball is ideal (this is about the size of a large grapefruit)
- 1 hula hoop
- 4 bases or bags, plus 4 x 8-foot (2.5 metre) high poles, with a rag tied on the end (like a thin flagpole). The pole is then firmly knocked into the ground to make a highly-visible base
- Coloured bibs or sashes for team identification

The bases are four stations. These are guarded by four 'station masters'. 'Railway workers' (the fielders) will try to help the station masters. The 'trains' (batters, or in this case, throwers) run between the stations, starting in the 'goods yard'. 'The grand station-master' (leader) guides the trains, but helps the station-master and railway workers.

To start, divide the children into two teams – give each team a set of coloured bibs. The trains go to the goods yard, and stand in a line. The railway workers spread themselves out over the diamond. The station-masters each go to their station (base).

The ball is given to the first train. He throws it somewhere in the area between the first and the third station (see illustration). Then he runs to the first station, or if there's time, to the second, third or even home (fourth) station. However, once the train stops at a station, it cannot start again until the ball is thrown by the next train.

If the ball is caught on the full by a railway worker or station-master, the train who threw it is 'derailed' (out). When a train is derailed, he must return to the goods yard, and join the back of the line.

The railway workers and the station-masters are not allowed to run with the ball (initially you might wish to allow the railway workers to run rather than pass the ball. Running with the ball gives the railway workers an advantage, particularly if they are not old enough to throw the ball properly.)

The railway workers must field the ball as quickly as possible and either:

- throw it to the station-master, who touches the ball on the base before the train arrives at the station. For example, Johnny is the first train. He throws the ball, and runs towards the first station. Sally picks up the ball and throws it to the station master, who touches the first base with the ball.

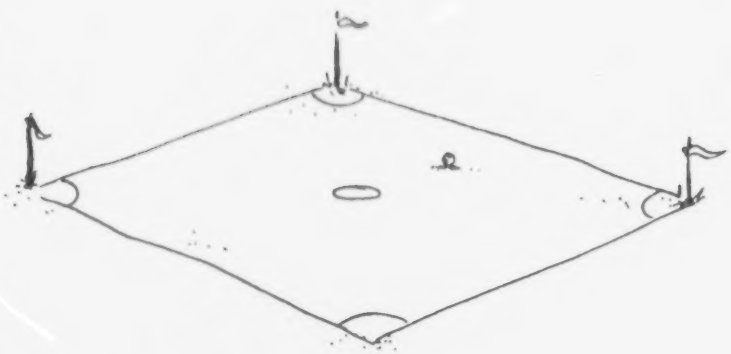
- throw the ball to the grand station-master who will be standing in the Central Station (the hula hoop), checking to see if any trains are still travelling towards any of the stations. If any train is not in a station it is derailed. (Or you can play that only the most advanced train, e.g. running to third base, say, is derailed.)

If the railway workers manage to do either of these, then the train is out and returns to the goods yard.

A train does not have reverse gear – it may not go back to a station having left it. When a train reaches the goods yard without being out, the train's team gets one point.

The last train has to try to run past all the stations and into the goods yard without being out: the last train is 'express'. (Or, once the last train has run as far as it can without being derailed, the grand station-master can have a turn to throw the ball, in order to give the last trains a chance to run to the final station. The grand station-master doesn't leave the station after throwing the ball.)

When each train has had a turn at throwing the ball, the points are added up, and the teams swap over.



Variations

When you begin with *Trains and Stations,* it may be good not to limit the number of trains allowed in any station at a time. Gradually limit the number to three, then to two – and finally to only one train per station; so that if the train at Station 1 begins running toward Station 2, the train at Station 2 must run to Station 3: so the trains are 'shunted' to the next station.

143. CARRIAGES

There are no station-masters, instead all the fielders are railway workers. Again, they are not allowed to run with the ball.

When the ball is thrown, the railway workers line up where the ball was retrieved, all facing the same direction. They stand with legs apart, forming a tunnel. The ball is passed through the tunnel as quickly as possible. When each worker has passed the ball, the last one holds it up.

The train who throws the ball runs to a station, trying to reach it before the ball is held up.

144. EXPRESS TRAINS

This is played exactly in the same way as *Carriages,* except that the train who threw the ball tries to run through as many stations as possible, before the ball is held up. He then returns to the goods yard. He gets a point for each station he reaches before the ball is through the 'leg tunnel'.

145. BASKET TRAINS

Equipment: a basket – preferably one without a handle that could obstruct the ball. (A cardboard box could be used instead.) This is placed in the centre of the diamond of 'stations'.

Railway workers are allowed to run with the ball if they are outside the diamond created by the bases.This time there is no grand station-master. Instead, the ball must be thrown into the basket at the Central Station (without bouncing out!). If a train is not in a station, it is out.

Or a railway worker outside the diamond can run with the ball to the station – if he arrives there before the train who is travelling towards it, the train is out and must return to the goods yard.

(You can, alternatively, have a basket at each station as well as at the Central Station.)

146. SWEDISH ROUNDERS or DERAILED

Equipment:

- one play ball
- one T, available at sports stores. (A simple version can be made by driving a garden stake into the ground so that the top of it is at waist-height for the hitter.)

This time, the play ball is hit off the T with the fist; or thrown (if a child prefers to do this). Another version involves the batter or 'train' kicking the ball when it is slowly rolled towards him by the station master.

To get a train out, the railway workers must brand him, or touch him with the ball – before he gets to the station. Railway workers are not, however, allowed to run with the ball unless they have to retrieve the ball from beyond the borders of the diamond.

The train is allowed to dodge the ball, provided he is still within one pace either side of the line which forms the side of the diamond. If the train 'punches' the ball off the T, and it is caught on the full, the train is out and returns to the goods yard. If there are other trains on the stations, they remain in (or return to) the station where they were at the time of the punch.

Hints to the leader:

- The grand station-master role may be dropped as the children improve at the game, but it helps the timid children to enter the game initially. (They tend to stay close to the leader when fielding.)
- Ask the trains to raise one arm when they reach a station and decide to stay there – this makes it easier to judge whether a train is safely in the station or not.

Rounders is a game that requires fair play and acceptance of the leader's judgment. This is very challenging to some children. To encourage children to play fairly and accept the leader's judgment, various methods may be tried:

- At the end of the game, award bonus 'homers' (a point for a train who has successfully travelled through all four stations) for the teams that have encouraged each other and worked well together.
- As a consequence for any negative comments or criticism towards any player, or inappropriate questioning of the leader's decisions, a train can be asked to drop back one place in the throwing order. Or more seriously, be sent to the back of the line. If a fielder behaves in this way, you can allow a train to advance to the next station.

These options place the onus on the players themselves and create positive peer-pressure. It is, however, important to clearly state the consequences for positive and negative behaviour in advance, before the game begins.

Rounders-games can easily be dominated by a few of the more physically gifted children. Whilst wanting to encourage the strong, it can result in the weaker, more reserved children feeling left out and so withdrawing from the game. *Carriages* and *Express Trains* are rounders game that involve, by necessity, all fielders at all times and are very exciting to the batters or throwers who are watching.

Trains and Stations and *Carriages* can both be developed into bat and ball games instead of throwing. Follow the same rules, but instead of throwing the ball, the train hits it with a bat.

A good way to begin to use the bat is to hit the ball with a 'T'. (T's can be bought through most sports stores or made in the way previously described.)

Begin by using a large grapefruit-size ball if possible, and a standard rounders bat. As the players' skills develop, a smaller, harder ball can be introduced.

At the very beginning, learning to use a bat can be frustrating for the batter if he cannot hit the ball very far. It also becomes boring for the fielders as they have little to do. One solution is to use a tennis racket and tennis ball. It is easier to hit and the ball travels further, giving the fielders a chance to run.

Chapter 7
Re-discovering the Playground

Many children today have forgotten how to play games. How often do you see children in school playgrounds, or on the streets, skipping, playing marbles, or playing traditional games? The wealth of verses, rules, and ideas for games that need no referee and no specialised equipment are rapidly being lost. At some schools I have visited, I have seen children playing a few playground games; but these were just the impoverished remains of what was once a rich cultural tapestry. Children very seldom still invent their own particular rules; they tend to just follow the basic structure, the skeleton of the game. How much more alive are games which also take account of specific, individual conditions and circumstances – such as involving the tree that stands in the play area, or inventing a rule to help a certain child with a physical handicap!

The oral tradition of verses (which often deal with social issues) has also faded. The rhythms of such words and rhymes can be highly beneficial to children's development. Playground games help children build up their motor skills, their social skills (e.g. in negotiation, tact and assertiveness); they can also help them develop their identity, their sense of themselves in relation to the world.

In the schools where I have visited or worked, I always spend much time in the playground 'reintroducing' games like hopscotch, clappies, four square, and a number of playground games I have either seen being played in eastern countries – where television and videos are still not the norm – or ones that I remember from my own childhood.

The children take up these games with great delight; and supervision of the play area also becomes much more relaxing for the teachers! There will be a noticeable difference in the number of bullying attacks – not that this does not occur in games, but the structure of a game, its rules etc. help the children to interact in a more social manner. Parents, too, may find that their children complain less about being bored, or are less interested in watching videos. In fact you may find that you have an empty house to yourself for an entire afternoon!

147. MOON, MOON

Number of players: About 5-10.

Play area: With chalk, a stone, or water, draw a circle on the ground about 5 paces across, as shown below. The circle can be altered according to the number of players.

One child is the sun. The other children are the moons. The sun tries to catch the moons. The moons go to the inside of the circle.

The sun stays on the outside. He may not cross over into the circle but must try to tip the moons who are inside. The sun may reach over the line, provided his toes do not cross over. He may even place one hand on the ground inside the circle to extend his range.

The game ends when either a player is tipped and then becomes the new sun, or all players are caught except one.

Variation

The circle can be divided into a half or quarter moon. This is done by drawing lines across the middle of the circle.The sun can now run along these line to catch the moons.

148. CLAPPIES

Equipment: one tennis ball

The first player begins with the ball. She tries to complete all the parts (given below), and then the variations, without dropping the ball. If this happens, the ball is given to the next player, who begins again with Part 1, and then adds the variations, beginning with Variation 1.

When all players have had a turn, the ball is returned to Player 1, who begins at Part 1 again. The winner is the child who successfully completes the most variations.

Part 1
The player throws the ball straight up in the air, and catches it.

Part 2
The player throws the ball, lets it bounce once on the ground, and then catches it.

Part 3
The player throws the ball up, lets it bounce on the ground, then 'bounces' or 'pats' it with her hand into the air, and lastly catches it.

Part 4
As in Part 3, but this time she pats it twice: once with the fingers of her hand pointing away from her body, then with the fingers pointing towards her.

Part 5
The player throws the ball up in the air, then claps her hands first behind his back, then in front of her body, and lastly catches the ball.

Variations
All the variations are added any time between throwing the ball and catching it (between the beginning and end of a part.)

Variation 1
The player completes parts 1 - 5 with the following addition: TWIDDLES (The player makes a circular motion with both hands. This is done by placing a palm of one hand on the back of the other. Fingers pointing sideways, thumbs near solar plexus.) The hands now rapidly circle each other.

Variation 2
Parts 1 - 5, adding SHOULDERS (The player touches her shoulders with both hands at some point between throwing and catching the ball.)

Variation 3
ELBOWS. (The player touches her elbows.)

Variation 4
KNEES. (The player touches both her knees – but her feet must be off the floor when she does.)

Variation 5
TOUCH THE GROUND. (The player touches the ground.)

Variation 6
TURN AROUND. (The player turns 360 degrees.)

149. WALL TENNIS

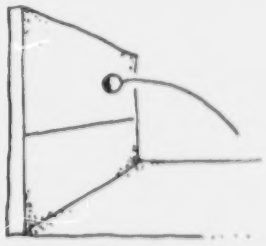
Number of players: 2

Equipment: one tennis ball per pair

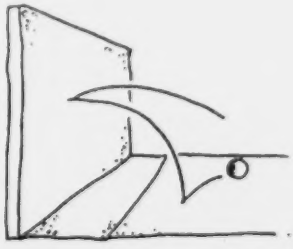
Play area: a wall and a smooth, hard surface for the ball to bounce on.

The players hit the ball to one another with their hands, so that the ball bounces on the wall and the ground before it is returned.

Variation 1
A line is drawn on the wall (1 metre off the ground). The ball must be hit above this line.



Variation 2
A line is drawn on the ground approx. 1 metre from the wall. The ball must bounce on the players' side of the line.



150. NEST AND EGGS

Equipment:
- stones, or some other objects, to represent eggs.
- a scarf or rag to use as blindfold

Play area:

Variations

* One player is the mother bird. She must protect her eggs from being stolen. The other players are crows who wish to steal the eggs. When one player says: **'Guard your eggs!'** the game begins.

* The mother bird is blindfolded. One player is assigned to be her 'guide-dog', and to prevent her from being harmed. The other players move the nest to a new place, and sit round it, trying to keep quiet. The mother bird tries to find her nest.

* The mother bird stands in the centre of the circle with one of the eggs in her hand. The other players stand with their toes on the circle, and the mother says the following rhyme:

  Mother bird has lost her way.
  Finds another if she may.

  Some of the players who are standing on the circle have an egg in their hands. In a small circle of, say, 9 players, there will be three eggs. The mother bird tries to tag the players who have an egg. These players may not move. She has three guesses.

  When one is tagged who has the egg, she is the next mother bird. If she uses up her three guesses without finding an egg, she chooses a new mother bird and the game begins again.

151. FINDING THE FIRE

Equipment: 1 stick

Play area:
a designated tree or post or 'water' (a safe area).

One person is the fire-seeker. He must find the fire-stick and tag the other players with it. He closes his eyes while the other players hide the stick somewhere in the play area. He looks for the stick, while the other players give him hints by saying **'Colder, colder'** if he is walking away from the stick, and **'Hotter, hotter'** when he is walking towards it. When he finds it, he shouts **'Fire's burning! Fire's burning!'** and begins chasing the other players with the stick in his hand.

A player tipped by the player carrying the fire-stick is out. A player can take refuge at the 'water' but for no longer than 10 seconds (or any other agreed period).

152. WOLF AND SHEEP

One child is the wolf. He must try to catch the 'smallest' sheep. One child is the shepherd. He stands in the front of the line. The sheep line up behind him, with their arms around the waist of the person in front.

The 'smallest' sheep is the one at the end of the line. If the line breaks, the person who wasn't able to hold on becomes the new wolf. The old wolf becomes the shepherd.

153. HUMPO BUMPO

Play area: Best played on grass! A circle three paces in diameter.

A game of physical skills and balance! Two players bump against each other within the circle. They hold one of their legs in one hand, and the other arm behind their back.

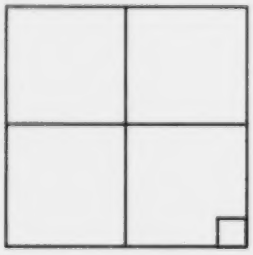
The winner is the one who manages to stay on one leg within the circle while bumping the other player out!

154. FOUR SQUARE

The next game is so popular that I usually recommend that the court be painted onto a tar or concrete surface – for endless use! Introduce the first version to the younger children (it prevents more aggressive playing). The older children will get bored and want to play the 'straight' version.

Number of players: Four at one time
Equipment: A play ball

Play area: A square divided into four equal boxes; each side of the square is about 4 yards (3.6 metres).



The aim of the game is to reach the highest square and remain there as long as possible (to remain as Ace).The squares are graded: the serving square (indicated by a small square on the outer corner) is 'Jack', the lowest in rank; the second square is 'Queen'; the third 'King' and the fourth and highest is 'Ace'.

The Jack serves the ball by hitting it into any of the other squares. The receiving occupant of a square hits it into another square.The hitting of the ball is done with an open hand. The hand therefore performs the same task as a tennis racket would in tennis. If the ball lands on the outer lines of a square it is considered to be in. If the ball lands on the inner lines it can be played again, or play can continue.

A player is out when:
- he catches or throws the ball
- he fails to return the ball
- he hits the ball so that it bounces in his own square (This rule does not apply to *Down Ball,* see below.)
- he hits the ball too hard and it lands outside the court.

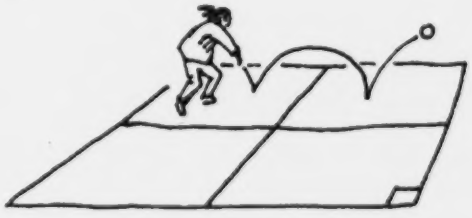
When a player is out, he goes to the back of the queue of those waiting to play. (Or, if only four are playing, he becomes Jack.) The rest of the players are then 'promoted': if the King went out, then the Queen becomes King, Jack becomes Queen and a new server (Jack) enters the game.

To score: the Ace gets a point every time a player goes out (either Jack, Queen, or King).

Variation

155. DOWN BALL

The players must hit the ball so that it first bounces in their own square before going into another square.



156. TREE TAG

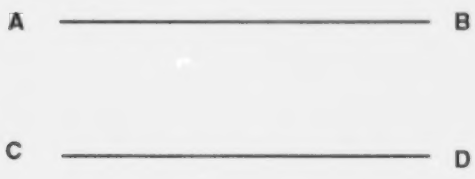
Play area: Designated 'safe' areas', e.g. trees – one less than the number of players.

The children stand in the middle of the play area. At a signal, they all run to one of the trees. The child who wasn't able to reach a tree stands in the middle of the play area and when the others change places, tries to reach an unoccupied tree.

157. CARRY IF YOU CAN

Equipment: Each player must have a stone (about 7-8cm in diameter, 2cm thick)

Play area: Draw two lines on the ground, 4 - 5m apart.



The players divide into two teams of 4 - 8 players. One player from each team stands on line AB and tries to throw his stone so that it lands on line CD. The player whose stone lands on or closest to the line is the winner, and his team has won the right to play first.

Step 1:
Team A stands behind line AB, and Team B put their stones on line CD. Team A tries, one at a time, to throw their stones on top of Team B's stones on line CD.

If a player fails to hit one of Team B's stones, then it is Team B's turn. If all the players in Team A are successful, then they go on to Step 2.

Step 2:
Team A stands behind line AB, and Team B put their stones on line CD as in Step 1. Team A throw their stones, one at a time, a one-hop distance from where they are standing.

Each player then hops so that he lands on his stone with his foot. He then lifts up his foot, balancing on his heel, picks up his stone and tries to hit one of Team B's stones.

If a player fails to land on his stone, or falls over, or misses one of Team B's stones, then Team B is allowed to try. If all the players of Team A or Team B are successful, they go on to Step 3.

Step 3:
Instead of throwing the stone a one-hop distance, it is thrown a two-hops distance, and the same sequence repeated as in Step 2.

Step 4:
The same again, but this time three-hops distance.

Step 5:
Team A balance their stones on top of the arch of one of their feet, and from line AB they hop towards Team B's stones on line CD. When they get there, they try to drop their stone on one of Team B's. The stone must not fall off the foot at any other time.

Step 6:
Step 5 is repeated, but the players put the stones between their two feet.

Step 7:
The same, but the stone is held between the knees.

Step 8:
The stone is held between the thighs.

Step 9:
The players bend over backwards in order to balance their stones on their chests as they walk toward line CD.

Step 10:
The stones are put on the left shoulder of the players.

Step 11:
Then they are put on the right shoulder.

Step 12:
The players put their stones between the chin and the neck and walk towards CD, without bending.

Step 13:
Again, the players hold the stone between their feet, but this time they hop backwards.

Step 14:
Hopping backwards, the stone is held between the knees.

Step 15:
The players hold the stone between their thighs, and hop backwards towards CD.

Step 16:
The players bend forwards this time, and balance their stones on their backs. Walking forwards to CD, they let their stones fall over their heads to hit the stones on CD.

Step 17:
As in Step 16, but walking backwards.

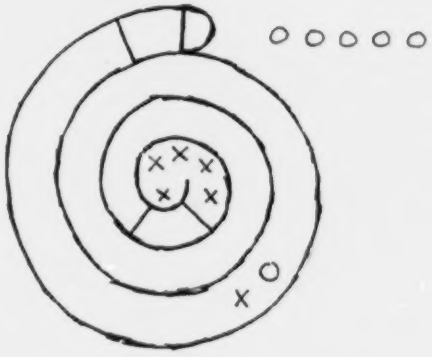
Step 18:
As in Step 16, but walking forwards with the stone balanced on the players' heads.

If a player fails, then his whole team loses its turn; and when it is able to play again, it replays the Step it was trying to complete. The first team to complete all eighteen steps is the winner.

The following game is from Japan. Its spiral motif is especially suited to Advent time. Any form of contest can be used to determine who wins the advantage: *Paper, scissors, stone* (see game **195**); *Thumb wrestling* (see **196**); reflex games (see **197-199**), tongue twisters ....

158. MAZE RACE

Play area:



Team A's aim is to reach the outer limit of the spiral, while Team B tries to reach the centre. One player from each team starts at a given signal. They run round the spiral: Player A from the centre outwards, and Player B from the outside inwards. When they meet, they have a 'contest' (see below) to determine who will be able to continue.

If Player A wins, he continues to run towards Team B, but now a new Player B has begun to run round the spiral towards him. When they meet, they have another contest. The loser of the contest drops out of the game.

When a member of a team, let's say Player A, reaches Team B's home, another Player A begins running from the centre of the spiral towards Home B. The team that succeeds in getting one of their players into their opponents' starting area, wins.

Variation

If a player loses a contest, he does not drop out but returns to his team's starting area while the winner runs on to meet the next challenger.

Using this method the game ends when *all* the players from one team have managed to get to the starting area of their opponents.

159. PAPER, SCISSORS, STONE

This is a hand contest used in the *Maze Race*. Two players stand facing each other, with their hands behind their backs. They count: **'One, two, three!'**

On **'Three!'** they each bring one hand forward, making the shape that represents either paper, stone or scissors.

Paper beats stone: it can cover the stone.

Scissors beats paper: it can cut the paper.

Stone beats scissors: it can blunt the scissors.

If the hands are the same, then the players count again.

160. THUMB WRESTLING

The aim is to hold your opponent's thumb down with your thumb for a count of three. Two players face each other and link hands. The following verse is said:

> One, two, three, four
> I declare a thumb war.
> Bow ....
> *(they make their thumbs bow)*

And then the fight ensues! The winner is the one who holds down his opponent's thumb while saying:

> One, two, three
> I declare VICTORY!

118

REFLEX GAMES

161. CROCODILE JAWS

Two players face each other with their hands together, touching each others' hands with the tips of their fingers.

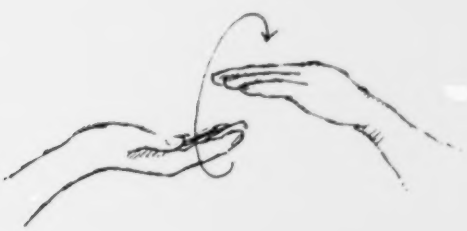
One player starts. He tries to 'catch' his opponent's hands between his hands, in his 'crocodile jaws', before the other takes his hands away. He is successful if he touches his opponent's hands, thus 'biting' him. If successful, he tries to catch him again. If he misses, it is the other's turn.

162. KNUCKLES

As above, except opponents place their fists together and take it in turns to try and hit each others' knuckles with their clenched fists. (Watch out for bruising!)

163. FLIP OVERS

One player holds his hands palm up (he will be the 'striker'). The other player places his hands palm down on his opponent's. The striker must very quickly withdraw his hand from underneath, and touch the back of the opponent's hand before the latter withdraws it. No feints or dummies are allowed.



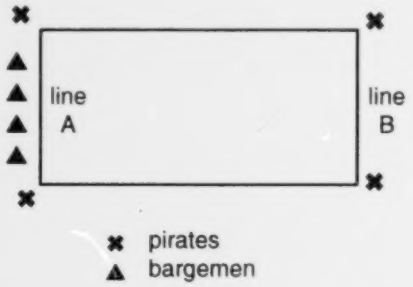
The players change over when the striker is unsuccessful; the 'striker' always has palms facing upwards.

The next game is similar to *'Running the Gauntlet'* (see chapter 9). *Barges and Banks, Locks and Barges* and *Shooting the rapids* are all very similar, but have small variations.

164. BARGES AND BANKS

Number of players: 2 teams of 4 players

Play area:



Divide the players into two teams: bargemen and pirates. The bargemen try to reach line A and return to line B without being caught.

The pirates (in our example, Team A) stand on the four corners of the court. One of the pirates gives the signal for the game to begin.

The bargemen try to run across the river without being caught by the pirates. The pirates can either run along bank A or bank B, or they can swim to the middle of the river. However, they can only chase one bargeman: if they do not succeed in catching this one, they must return to their corner before trying to catch another.

A bargeman is safe if he stands on one of the 'safe' banks of the river. If a bargeman is caught, the teams swap over: Team A becomes the bargemen, and Team B becomes the pirates.

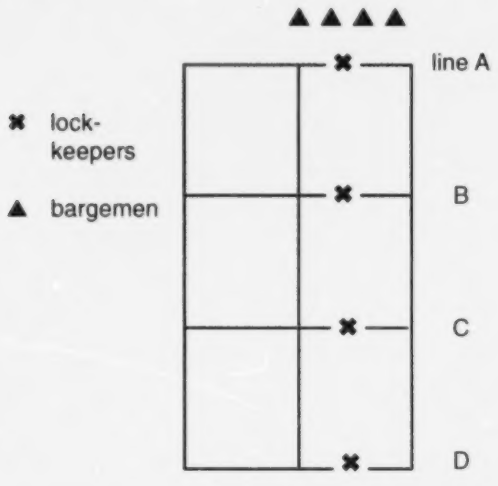
However, if a bargeman succeeds in crossing bank A and then back to bank B without getting caught, his team scores 1 point, and can try to reach bank A again. The winning team is the one which scores the most.

Locks and Barges is very similar to *Barges and Banks*. Make sure that the size of the play area is carefully measured – the dimensions are quite crucial!

165. LOCKS AND BARGES

Number of players: 2 teams of 4 players

Play area:



The aim is for the bargeman to pass across the locks and back without being caught. The lock-keepers must keep two feet on their lines at all times. The lock-keepers each stand on one of the lines which cross the court (locks A, B, C or D on the diagram above). They are not allowed to move to any other lock, except for the lock-keeper on lock A, who can move down the centre lock at any time.

The game begins when one of the bargemen touches hands with Lock-keeper A (on lock A). The bargemen try to dodge lock-keepers A, B, C and D to reach lock D and then return to cross lock A without being tagged.

The bargemen MUST stay within the lines of the court – if not, they lose their turn and become the lock-keepers.

If any bargeman is tagged, the teams swap over and the game begins again. If a bargeman crosses D and A without being tagged, his team gets a point; and all of the bargemen return to begin again behind lock A. The team with the most points wins.

Variation

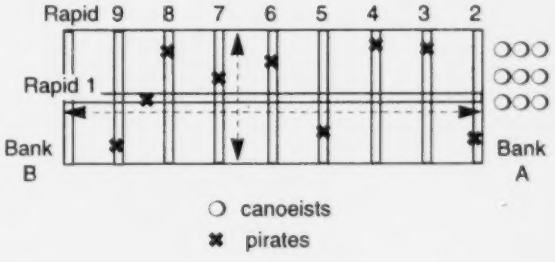
Instead of having one lock-keeper per line, I sometimes use three on lock A, two on lock B, and one on lock C. Then players score 1 point if they cross lock B, 2 points if they cross lock C without being tagged, and 3 points if they cross lock D.
If two or three bargemen run at the same time, they can work together to distract the lock-keepers.

The next game works wonderfully on a sandy beach: it is easy to dig the trenches (the rapids), and the sand is harmless to fall on. It is a variation of *Locks and Barges* and *Barges and Banks,* that originally came from Bangladesh.

166. SHOOTING THE RAPIDS

Number of players: 2 teams of 9 players

Play area:



Divide the players into two teams: canoeists and pirates. The canoeists stand on Bank A. Their aim is to try to cross all nine rapids and then return to Bank A.

The pirates each stand in a rapid. They are only allowed to move within their own rapid, except for the defender in Rapid 1 who is allowed to move down the central rapid, in the first part of the game; and the pirate in Rapid 9 who can move down the central rapid in the second part.

The game begins when the pirate in Rapid 1 gives the signal. Then the canoeists try to reach Bank B without being tagged. If one gets tagged, the teams swap over and the game begins again. But if the canoeists are successful, they wait behind Bank B until all the canoeists have arrived safely.

The second part of the game begins with a signal from the pirate in Rapid 9. If a canoeist reaches Bank A without being caught, he scores 1 point for his team. The teams then swap over and begin with part 1 again.

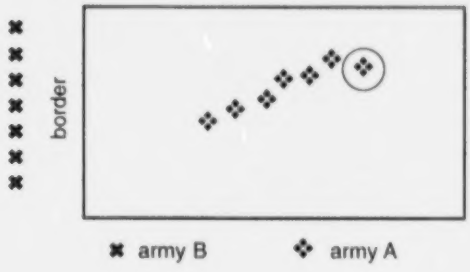
The team with the most points wins.

167. BASE CAMP

The next game is derived from another game from Bangladesh, and has the unusual feature of a 'goal' which moves closer and closer to the team that wishes to score.

Number of players: 2 teams of 7 - 10 players
Equipment: a plastic hoop as the base camp.

Play area:



The players divide into two teams: the home forces (Army A) and the enemy (Army B). One player from Army A is the Commander and stands in the circle (see diagram). The rest of Army A form a chain from the commander towards the border.

Army B moves onto the court from behind the border to begin the game. Army A's chain tries to catch Army B's soldiers until the commander gives a signal.

At the signal, the chain breaks loose and soldiers A try to cross the border without being killed (tagged) by Army B, who are now the chasers. Army B is not allowed to home guard* the base camp.

If a soldier from Army A is tagged, he is 'dead' and sits out of the game. The first soldier to cross the border wins a medal for bravery. He helps the commander by standing in the base camp and jumping as far as he can towards the border. The base camp is moved to this spot. (The place where the brave soldier landed is the new camp's centre.) The brave soldier then joins Army A again and the game continues.

When the base camp reaches the border, Army A has scored a point, and the game begins again with the same team.

The commander can also score a goal, by leaving the base camp and running to cross the border. If he scores, he returns to the base camp and the game begins again. However, if the commander gets tagged when trying to run towards the starting line, the teams swap over, and the game begins again.

When the commander leaves the base camp, a player from Army B can step into the base camp; and if the teams change, he will be the new commander. The team with the most points wins.

* see glossary

MARBLES

168. SNOOKER

This is probably the most common and popular of all the marbles games. It needs to be played on a smooth surface. It is a two person game but can easily be adapted for more players. Complete a *Liner* (game 174) to see who goes first.

This is a traditional 'knuckles down' style of shooting game where one knuckle on the shooting hand must touch the ground. The thumb then flicks the marble. The shooting hand must be no further than a couple of inches (5cm) away from the shooting line. The shooting hand is not allowed to cross the line. In other words the marble has to be flicked not thrown.

1. Draw a circle about 10 feet (3 metres) across.

2. In the centre of the circle, 12 marbles are placed either in a tight pack or in a cross.

3. The first player shoots and tries to knock one of the marbles out of the ring.

4. After this shot the following things can happen.

   i) If none of the marbles are shot out of the ring, you lose your turn. If your shooter ends up in the circle, you leave it there. That is where you will shoot from the next time it is your turn. If your shooter goes outside the ring, then you pick it up and shoot from the edge next time.

   ii) If you shoot and hit another marble or more than one marble out of the ring, but your own shooter also ends up outside the ring, you get to keep the marbles you knocked out. Your turn is over and you shoot from the outside next time.

   iii) The best outcome is this: you shoot and knock one or more marbles out of the ring, but your shooter remains inside the ring. In this case you get to have another go, shooting from where your shooter stopped rolling. This can be repeated over and over until either of the first two options occur.

The winner of the game is the first to knock out six marbles. If this is done consecutively, without a break, then the winner keeps all twelve marbles.

169. DEAD EYE or CANNONS

This is a simpler version of *Snooker.* In this game your shooter has to end up *outside* the ring in order to claim any of the marbles you may have knocked out. A smooth, flat playing area is needed. Between four to eight players can play at a time.

1. A ring of about 6 to 7 paces across is drawn. Each player places five marbles in the middle of the ring. The marbles are tightly clustered together.

2. Complete a liner to see who goes first. The first shooter breaks the marble-pack with the aim of knocking out as many marbles as possible, while endeavouring to end up with his own marble outside the ring. If his marble does not end up outside the ring, then he must replace the marbles he knocked out, putting them back into the middle of the ring. If he is successful in knocking out some marbles and ending with his shooter outside the ring, he gets to keep the others he knocked out.

3. Each shooter may only have one turn at a time, regardless of the outcome. The shooters take it in turns. The game is over when all the marbles have been knocked out.

170. JACKS

This is a game where the rewards and losses are high. A flat smooth surface is needed.

1. The players play a counting-out game to decide who will be Jack. In another variation, only those who want to be Jacks submit themselves to the counting game. The others wait.

2. If you are the Jack you place a marble on the ground and walk back about twelve paces. A shooting line is drawn. All players line up and take it in turns to shoot.

3. The aim is to hit the Jack marble. If you do, then you become the new Jack and collect all the marbles shot so far. If you miss, then the Jack player will collect and keeps yours and everybody else's marbles, once each player has shot three marbles.

4. Another version of this game is as follows: if you hit the Jack marble then you collect it and all the others that have been shot; but the Jack player must also give you as many marbles again as were on the field at the time you made the hit.

171. NOUGHTS AND CROSSES

This game is good for the pavement (sidewalk) although it can be played on earthy ground. It can only be played with two players.

1. Draw a Noughts and Crosses square on the pavement.

2. Draw a shooting line about 4 paces back (in another version you draw a circle around the squares at about the same distance back, and shoot from anywhere outside it.)

3. The aim of the game is to complete a diagonal or straight line of three marbles in three of the boxes. Taking it in turns the players may either try to place a marble in a box or knock the opponent's out.

4. There are two versions of what may count as a win:
   i) Only one marble is allowed in a box at a time This legal marble is either the one that was there first or one that manages to knock another cleanly out of a box. OR
   ii) There is no limit to the number of marbles in any one box. The first to make a 'three of a kind' wins.

172. SAILOR'S BOOT

This is an old favourite and can still be seen in many playgrounds. You'll need a smooth flat surface. Usually between two and five players can join in.

1. One of the players takes off a shoe and places it in the middle of the the playing area.

2. Draw a circle of about 4-5 paces across.

3. Every players puts in five target marbles around the 'boot'.

4. The first player shoots in knuckle-down style. He tries to knock one of the target marbles so that it hits the boot. If he can do so he keeps the target marble and gets another turn, shooting from the outside of the ring each time. The game ends when all the target marbles have been captured.

173. LEAP FROGS

You can play this game on a rough or smooth surface, usually about 10 players at a time.

1. Player 1 throws a marble about 10 paces away. This is called the Jack.

2. Each player in turn tries to underhand throw a marble as close as possible to the target. Anyone who gets within a hand span of the Jack wins. The game stops as soon as someone has done this.

3. If you are playing for keeps, the winner may claim the Jack. In another, tougher version the winner may claim all the marbles that were thrown.

4. If no-one gets within a hand span of the target then a step is measured away from the Jack. Anyone who has thrown within that step gets to try an eye-dropper. The closest marble tries first. This is done by standing over the Jack and dropping your marble from eye-level, trying to hit the target. If you are successful you claim the Jack as you would have done if you had been within a hand span.

174. LINERS

This is a very traditional way to begin a game, to see who will go first.

1. Draw two lines about a foot (30cm) apart and then walk back about 8-10 paces. Now draw another line where you are standing. This is called the throwing line.

2. No-one must cross the throwing line. Each player now has a turn to try and throw a marble as near as possible to the closest of the two lines. If a marble rolls over the back line then it is automatically out.

3. The player with the marble closest to the line wins the right to be the first to shoot in the next game.

Chapter 8
The Greek Olympics
Age 11

Beauty, Truth, Strength

EQUIPMENT

Javelin

I use lightweight javelins of up to 400 grams in weight. As these are quite expensive, a couple can be bought every year, so that the school accumulates them over time. Otherwise, they can also be made from (straight!) saplings or bamboo with wound string handles and sharpened points.

For bamboo javelins, insert a dowel and sharpen one end. The dowel will also give a bit of weight. (I have also seen metal points used with bamboo.)

The handle should be positioned so that when you balance the javelin at the handle-end nearest the tip, it does not tilt back or forward. In this way the javelin will be slightly weighted towards the sharpened end. This will allow it to stick into the ground.

A wooden javelin can be decorated and carved, with a dedication to the gods running vertically down the shaft; children who make their own often regard them as real treasures.

Use hula hoops or old tennis balls for targets

Discus

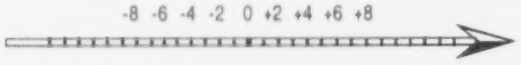
Making a discus is also a worthwhile thing to do. Select a close grained heavy wood; a block measuring about 9 inches across and 2 inches deep (23 x 5cm) should be used. Cut, whittle, and chisel the block down to a disc shape. Model it on a 0.75 kilo discus. Soak or immerse it in oil for at least a couple of weeks (months is better) to prevent cracking and to add extra weight. Then carve and burn the dedication to the gods in Greek writing either in a circle or a spiral. I usually use a small soldering iron to go back over the carved inscription to make it a little clearer.

Weights (for Running Weight-jumps)

I make simple weights out of plastic-lined cloth bags. Sew a long tube with one end sewn together. Put enough sand in a plastic bag and place this inside the tube. Tie a knot immediately above the sand, and then one approximately 20-30 cm above it (this forms the handle). The weights should weigh about 1.5 kg (3 lbs) each. Alternatively, small weight-lifting dumb-bells can be used.

For the High Jump

Use two javelins stuck in the ground with an elastic 'practice high-jump band' between them. (This is an elastic rope covered with 1 foot (30cm) long, thin foam rectangles. These are easily made or can be bought as 'practice high jump bars' from most sports suppliers)



A measuring arrow: This will be needed in the high-jump event. Use an arrow or 2-3ft (60-90cm) length of thin dowelling. Mark it every inch along its shaft from the bottom to the top. About half way up the shaft make a mark that is distinct from all others. This will be the 'zero' or starting measure. On one side of this mark write +1,+2,+3 and so on until you have come to the end. On the other side of the zero mark, write -1, -2, -3, and so on.

Golden Cloth

This is used instead of the starting 'shot' of a gun. The Ancient Greeks began their events by holding a golden cloth over one arm, and letting it fall. The signal that the runners can start the race is given by dropping the cloth to the ground.

Tunics

The children enjoy making the day as authentic as possible, so dressing up is always a feature – not only for the athletes, but also the judges (teachers, parents and other helpers)!

The athletes wear short white tunics or togas, made from old sheets, over a white t-shirt and shorts. These can be decorated with their city's colours (see 'Olympic Camp'). An old white sheet is all that is needed. Cut it into a rectangle between 8-10 feet long, 1-2 feet across (2.5-3m by 30-60cm), depending on the height and shoulder width of the athlete. Cut a hole in the middle so that it may be slipped over the head. A belt should be tied around the waist. The tunic should be about three inches above the knees.

The athletes also sometimes like to make their own laurel wreaths. These are worn at the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. Similarly, the judges (Gods and Goddesses) can wear long tunics, with gold-sprayed wreaths if desired!

Scrolls

These also help make the event more 'authentic'. Scrolls are carried in the Marathon, used in the Relay Race, and used to keep scores.

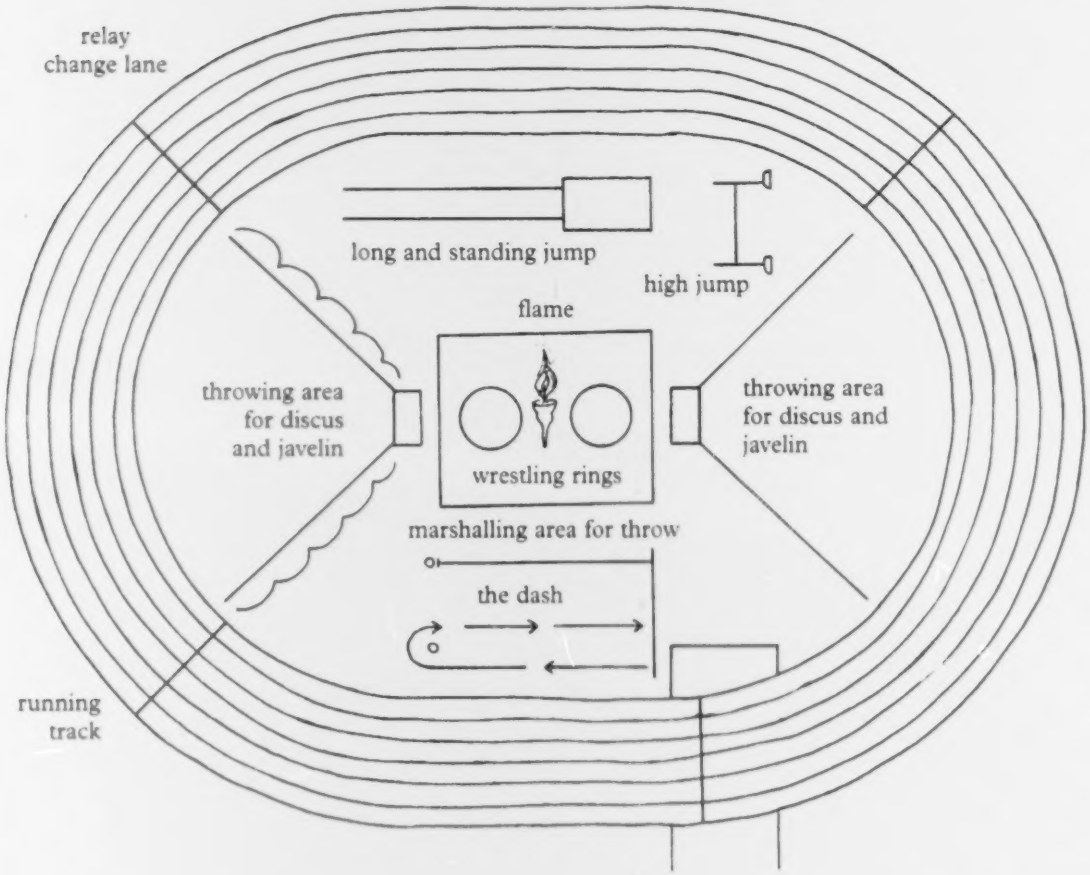
Make a simple scroll with some paper and a dowel. For the athletes, the following words can be inscribed: ***'Beauty, Truth, Strength – Let the Games begin!'***

Medals

Simple but beautiful medals made from clay and baked can be given to each athlete. A silk ribbon may be attached to hang it around the neck. Or a simple wooden stand made so that the medal can sit on a shelf when it is taken home.

PREPARATION OF THE ARENA

The Olympic Arena (a playing field) must be prepared before the children arrive for the Olympic Camp. Below is a suggested layout for the events. These are marked out with chalk or paint, ropes and flags.



PRACTICE

The children enjoy the practice leading up to the games almost as much as the day of the event itself. In a world so full of instant gratification, to get pleasure from practising seems to me a healthy thing.

It is important to practise 2 or 3 times a week, for an hour, over several months. In this way, the children build up competence in all events and can choose their favourite events for the day.

A day or two before the Olympics, the newly-formed city teams (see 'The Olympic Camp') have several practice sessions. The athletes, in city teams, move around all events with their city leader or Counsellor (a teacher or parent).

All athletes participate in all events during the practice, but at the end of the day they choose which events they would like to enter at the Olympics. (Normally they choose 2 or 3, although if practically possible it is ideal for all athletes to participate in all events.)

THE EVENTS

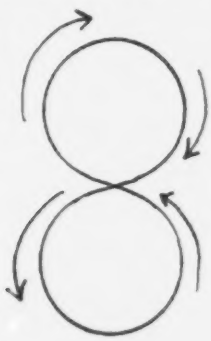
The events are described in the order they are played at the Games. Practice exercises as well as the final technique are described. (In Javelin, for example, there are two kinds of throw: an introductory, practice throw, and the throw that is used on the day.)

(1) RUNNING

175. THE MARATHON

This is a one mile cross-country-style run. On the day, the athletes each carry a scroll. Stewards are placed along the route to direct the runners.

Begin training the athletes with a half-mile run, gradually building up to a one-mile distance. Not all children will be able to run one mile; I usually design the course in a figure of eight, so that those who aren't able to complete the whole course can finish halfway.



Encourage the children to run beautifully by imagining that they are carrying a laurel wreath on their heads; by letting their arms swing freely; and by making sure that their legs are doing the work.

The Greeks worked with this threefold principle as well: they saw it in terms of body (the power and strength of the legs and arms), trunk (a relaxed chest and back), and spirit (a free and 'carried' head). So in running, the athlete's posture should be upright, and she should run with a sense of lightness. It may sound obvious, but to run with both strength and beauty is one of the hardest things to do: particularly if one is tired!

On the day of the Olympics, the first and last lap of the Marathon is around the Arena.

176. THE DASH

This is a 100m sprint: 50m to a pole, around it, and 50m back to the finishing line. This reflects the ancient Greeks' less goal-orientated concept of running: that you do not only run towards, but also away from something. They felt that becoming aware of the dynamic between these two polarities of 'back and front space', enabled the runner to be more 'present' - instead of focusing only on striving to reach the finishing line. Again, remind the athlete to run beautifully and let her legs do the work!

On the day, no more than four runners can run a race at one time (otherwise there will be too many collisions when they run round the pole!).

177. THE MINI MARATHON

This is a 300-400 metre race around the track. Use a staggered start. But once the race begins, the runners do not have to keep in lane.

THE RELAY RACE usually takes place at the end of the Games, as it is one of the most exciting events. The athletes should practise receiving the baton (scroll) while already moving. This enables them to get off to a 'flying start'.

(2) JUMPING

178. THE RUNNING JUMP

Step 1: Running for speed
When teaching children to long-jump, I use the image of the four elements to help them. Begin by letting each child in turn run and jump – to get a feel of the ground, and of the sand when landing. Then let them run again, this time 'building up the fire' as they approach the sand pit – running faster and faster (at top speed by the time she reaches the sand pit.)

Encourage the children to run in a free and healthy way: relaxed shoulders, head not too far forward or too far back, arms swinging freely from the shoulders, back straight. In order to help them run smoothly and gracefully, tell them to 'run like water'.

Step 2: Leaving the ground
A successful long-jumper makes use of gravity when she leaves the ground at the start of her jump. Weight helps achieve a lengthy jump. When the child reaches the sand pit, she should use the 'weight of earth' to give her the strength to leap into the air.

Step 3: Flying in the air
The longer the jumper can stay in the air, the more successful (and aesthetic) her jump will be. Encourage the children to use the element of air: to enjoy the feeling of flying.

Step 4: Landing on the earth
Tell the children that their jump will be measured from where they leave the ground to the closest mark their body makes on the sand (e.g. not necessarily where the feet land).
Remind them that the Greeks placed as much value on the *quality* and *grace* of the jumper as on the length of the jump. So how the jumper lands is also important – which is where the fluidity of water comes in.

I prefer the children to discover for themselves where they feel the various 'moments' are. The way I have described it is the conclusion they usually come to - but it sometimes varies. The children can make a good case for the **run up** stage being like **water,** getting faster and more powerful; the **take off** being like a **fiery** explosion; the air moment seldom differs; but the **landing** comes when we return to **earth.**

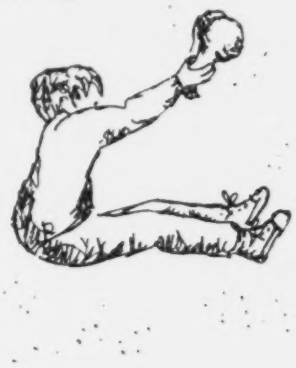
The length of the jump can be measured from the board (or sand wall) – the last place your foot touches before you leap – in adult 'feet'-lengths. Prepare this before the event.

179. WEIGHT JUMP

The Ancient Greeks included weight jumps (with hand weights) in their Olympics. It is thought that this method enabled them to jump as far as in the running jump, perhaps even further. The children often won't be able to jump quite as far, but this activity is important because it helps them experience gravity, and its uses.

The jumper takes a weight in each hand. He stands facing the direction in which he will jump, with his feet together.

He begins to run, building up speed as he approaches the sand. He swings the weights back behind him, at the same time bending his knees in preparation for the jump.



As he swings the weights forward, he jumps – kicking his legs forward. Just before landing on the earth, he swings the weights behind himself again, and releases them.

180. HIGH JUMP

The Greeks didn't have high jump as we know it; apparently the only similar event was an ancient type of pole-vaulting (over live horses). It is believed that this could have been derived from the Cretan tradition of acrobatic bull-leaping.

Outside Athens is a site where, it is believed, high jump was practised – where the athlete landed on stone. This was, some think, so that athletes learned to land gracefully on their feet, truly meeting the earth.

In our Olympics, therefore, we don't have any mats; the two jumps used (the athlete can choose) are hurdle jumps and scissors jumps (see below).

Hurdle jump

This jump is done by approaching the rope directly – front on – and leaping over it, much as one would a hurdle.

Scissor jump

The run-up is the essentially different thing here. A large arc is run so that the rope is approached side on and the leading leg is kicked up and over, while the other leg quickly follows in a scissor action.

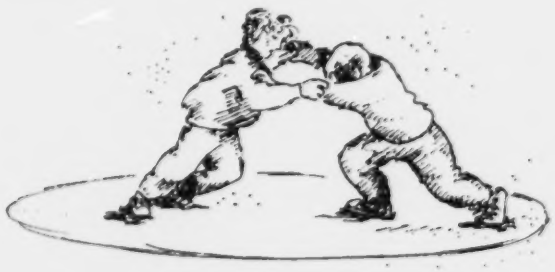
The height of the jump is not measured in the conventional way, but, instead, against the height of the child. This allows the smaller athletes (who conventionally would have no chance in this event) to take part on an even basis with the taller athletes.

After the athlete has successfully completed her jump, ask her to come and stand with her back to the rope that is at the height she just cleared.

Place the middle, or '0' point, of the measuring arrow on the sacrum of the athlete: more or less at the waist band of the shorts, or about 3 adult fingers above the top of the coccyx. Count the number of notches above or below the '0' mark on the arrow. In this way a short athlete clearing a certain height may have the score +3, but a tall athlete who has jumped and cleared the same height may only have the score of -1. The taller athlete will have to clear a much greater height in order to obtain a +3 score.

(3)

181. WRESTLING



The wrestling that the children do is modified: for even in Ancient Greece, particularly towards Greco-Roman times, this event was quite brutal. In order to make the competition more fair, I divide the children into weight groups.

The hands should be held at chest height, and a circle, a 'magic ring', is formed by the arms of the two wrestlers when they join hands. The key to this type of wrestling is to keep this ring as round as possible. The athletes must not use heads or shoulders to push, which would mean breaking the ring. The legs should do all the work, and the head should be kept clear and relaxed. Wrestling is a good way to teach children to make use of their body's weight and strength whilst keeping a 'clear head.'

If an athlete touches the line of the wrestling ring, or is pushed out of it, she loses one point. If she breaks the 'magic' arm-ring by using her shoulder, head, or chest to push, without quickly moving to re-establish it, then she also loses a point. She may absorb and move out of the path of a strong push but she must not pull against her opponent or deliberately release hands. If this occurs one point is lost.

(4)

182. DISCUS

The Greeks called the discus the 'Truth Sayer', because the way it flies through the air reflects the inner gesture of the athlete. The Greeks saw the discus as a way of sending messages to the gods. The discus was not *thrown*, but *released*. One needs to be very open and wide in the area of the rib-cage in order to release it successfully. When teaching children to throw the discus, I use various preparatory exercises to build up the skills needed.

Before you start, make sure the children realize that the weight of the discus means that it can hurt someone badly. Do not allow the children to throw it unless or until you indicate that it is safe to do so.

Step 1: Swinging the Discus

With the arm loosely resting next to the body, the discus is held in a vertical position, with the fingers spread apart, and the tips of the fingers curling around the edge of the discus.

Swing the discus in an arc (not higher than the shoulder) making sure it always remains vertical. Do this with both right and left arms, emphasising the weight of the swing at the bottom of the arc and lightness or levity at the top.

Step 2: Bowling

The children stand facing a partner. They are an arm's length away from each other. If you have left-handed children, make sure they choose a left-handed partner.

They roll their discus into their partner's empty hand, making sure that the discus rolls away from them. The last finger to leave the discus will be the index finger. The discus is held vertically.

Next, tell the children to put one discus down. Then the partners move away from each other, so that they are about 10 paces apart.

The child with the discus starts. She 'bowls' the discus along the ground to her partner by swinging the discus (as in Step 1) and then releasing it.

If the discus goes in a straight line, then the child had it vertical when she released it - but if it curves she did not! The elbow and wrist must remain relaxed throughout the release of the discus.

Encourage the children to use the weight of the discus, as in Step 1. If you feel confident, the next step could be to repeat the "bowling" of the discus, but this time throwing it into the air; it must still remain vertical.

Step 3: the Cloak

Each child has a discus and works alone. Begin by holding the discus in the throwing hand, as described in Step 1.

The child holds her other hand (the helping, or non-throwing hand) horizontally in front of her, pointing in the direction of her aim. The palm should face upwards. While the arm is being lifted, a small step is taken towards the direction of the aim. The helping arm then wraps an imaginary cloak around the child's body (see picture below). The child follows this arm, bending the knees and twisting the torso.

As the arm goes round the body, the child pivots on her toes, keeping the knees directly over the feet. At this point, the discus can be swung back and forth (see Step 1), so that the weight of it is experienced.

Then, slowly, the non-throwing arm unfolds the cloak again, and the body follows the movement back – but this time, the throwing arm comes forward. The children must not release the discus yet.

When unfurling the 'cloak', it is important that the 'albatross' position is reached (see next picture), in which the chest is forward and the arms – like the wings of a bird – are extended backwards. This is the position in which the discus will eventually be released.

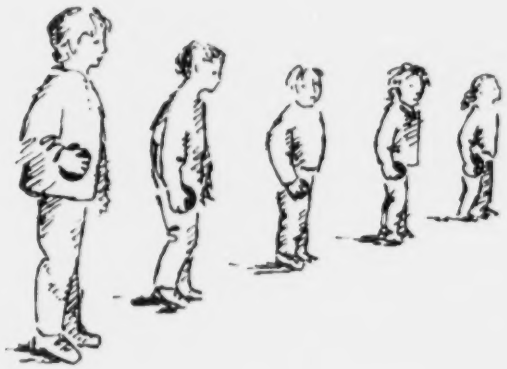
Step 4: Releasing the discus

Line the children up along the edge of the field, facing the way they will throw. Tell the (right-handed) child, who is standing at the end of the line, and holding the discus in her hand on the side where no-one else stands, that she is the 'anchor'. Tell the child on the other end of the line to take four or five steps forward, and the others to make a straight line between the two of them. This is so that if a discus is released early it will not hit another child.

An image that I find helps the children release, as opposed to throwing the discus, is to liken the gesture to that of skimming stones across water.

Follow Step 3: except now the discus is released. Remind the children to release the discus so that the *last* finger it touches is the index finger, as in the Bowling Exercise. The difference is that the discus is now bowled horizontally.

There must be **two distinct arm movements.** The first (i.e. the non-throwing or cloak hand/arm) should first swing as far as it can freely; only then should the throwing arm move. This is the throw used on the day of the actual Olympic Games: but then one child does it at a time.



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183. JAVELIN

Hints to the leader:

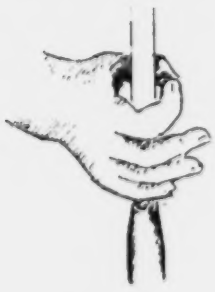
It is important to keep the athletes disciplined about the use of such apparatus as javelins – which can obviously harm others. Most accidents occur when good organisation is not enforced. Following these guidelines should prevent accidents from occurring:

- Delineate a clear **throwing line.**
- The athletes must not move from behind the throwing line - except when the leader has called 'COLLECT!'
- **Avoid lines or queues,** particularly when sharing javelins. If a queue must be formed, a clear second line can be drawn at least 5 paces behind the thrower. (Few accidents happen with the sharp point of the javelin, but more often with the opposite end, behind the thrower.)
- Never allow children of this age to **run** with a javelin.
- Carry the javelin **vertically** when walking.
- When picking up the javelin after a throw, **place one hand on the end of the shaft,** and twist and pull. Run your hand down the javelin to the handle as you bring it to the vertical.

To form a correct holding position:

With the non-throwing hand placed below the handle, hold the javelin upright, point down.

Then form a circle using the thumb and forefinger of the throwing hand. Run the throwing hand down the javelin until the thumb and forefinger touch the handle. The other fingers then close on the handle.



The Throw of the Hunter

This is an ideal throw for the beginner. The athletes stand in a line. The left-handed athletes should stand together, to the left of the other children. (It is best if they can work together in a group.)

Divide the number of athletes by the number of javelins (i.e. 20 athletes, 5 javelins makes 4 groups).

Do not allow the athletes to stand in lines or queues – they may be hurt if they stand behind a javelin thrower. See above for how they can stand instead. A rope can mark the throwing line. Give each athlete in each group a number.

To begin, all Number 1's stand with the javelin's point touching the ground, keeping it as vertical as possible. This is the READY position.

It is important that **all** the athletes, as well as the javelins, are standing straight and upright! The athletes hold the READY position. The non-throwing hand points at a target on the ground approximately 7 paces from the throwing line.

Drawing an arc in air, lift the javelin above the head, not above the shoulder. This is called DRAW.

Extend the arm backward a little more. This is called REACH.

Make sure the tip of the javelin is pointing towards the ground and *not* horizontally or up to the sky.

Release the javelin with a smooth and directed throw. This is called THROW.
All the athletes WAIT while the leader checks that everyone has thrown their javelin. The leader calls clearly 'WAIT!'

Only when the leader calls out 'COLLECT!' are the athletes allowed to go over the throwing line and retrieve their javelins, using the technique mentioned above (see Hints to the Leader).

Variation

At 'REACH!', bring the non-throwing hand to meet the throwing hand: the javelin is now being held in two hands. The point of the javelin must point down.

By bending the knees (but *not* the back), and reaching back with the arms, the athlete prepares to throw the javelin forward. Continue with THROW, WAIT and COLLECT.

The Throw of the Warrior

This is the throw used at the Games. The athlete aims to throw the javelin in a beautiful arcing flight, in this more recognisably classical throw.

The athletes stand in the READY position. Now the REACH position is slightly different: instead of holding the javelin slightly behind the head, the throwing hand is extended further back, so that the arms form a 45 degree angle to the ground.

The javelin is then released – THROW, WAIT and COLLECT follow.

Variation

At the REACH stage, put the back end of the javelin into the ground so that a small resistance is provided before throw.

Or, a partner can hold the end of the javelin near the ground – but great care must then be taken not to harm the partner.

(6) RUNNING

184. THE RELAY RACE

Originally, the relay race was run by passing a lit torch from runner to runner: but I usually use a scroll! This is a 4 x 75m or 4 x 100m relay race, depending on the size of your track.

Each city has a scroll which will be passed from runner to runner. At each station on the track (see diagram of layout of Arena) stands one runner from each city.

The runners have a staggered start: the runner in the outside track must be 4 paces ahead of the runner next to her, etc. Runners must stay in their tracks.

As in a conventional relay race, the scroll is passed from runner to runner, and the team with the fastest and most beautiful runners wins.

This is a very exciting event. It also offers the opportunity for children who may be shy of performing on their own, to participate without feeling exposed. It is a good idea to have the fastest runner run last.

The Olympic Camp

It is wonderful when other schools or groups all work towards an Olympic Day and meet together. (For instance, at the 1995 Olympics in Sussex, UK, we had 200 children taking part.) This is best done by the schools all meeting together before the Olympic Day, at the chosen location.

Divide the children into city teams (e.g. Athens, Thebes, Corinth and Sparta), taking an equal number of children from each school group to make up a city (e.g. 5 children from every school in each team).

The first day is spent practising the events (see 'Practice'). After supper the children can paint or draw their city's colours onto their tunics (see 'Equipment').

We then have great fun playing a massive night game altogether. (For example, *Storm the Castle* (game 194) works wonderfully with so many players – we call it *Storm the Acropolis* for this occasion!)

The children can camp in city or class groups.

Note: Parents are normally very pleased to help with catering and extra supervision, and get a great deal of pleasure from being part of this event, despite a rather sleepless night!

The Olympic Day

The Opening Ceremony

The athletes, dressed up and lined up in their city states, march towards the Olympic Flame to the rhythm of a drum beat, and perhaps some flute players play. Practice the day before will ensure beautifully choreographed movements that have been specially designed for the ceremony.

Each city state is headed by a torchbearer. The torches may be lit from the campfires of the cities or classes. (Simple torches can be made by wrapping a cloth around a wooden handle, and dipping this in kerosene. Obviously extreme care needs to be taken when doing this.) Then a special story and a verse may be recited, invoking the gods to give the athletes strength and grace.

Next the Eternal Flame is lit by the torchbearers. (We make the Eternal Flame with a paraffin-soaked Hessian bag in a big metal container, specially shaped. The container is placed on a raised dais.) This is the sign that the Games have begun.

Scoring

As well as strength, skill and the physical beauty of the athletes, their inner qualities – such as determination and effort – are also prized at these Olympic Games. There are many ways this can be judged. The athletes performance is assessed on various levels.

A consideration for **strength** may relate to how fast they run, how high they jump etc., but also to how determined they were in achieving their goal. For example, the first runner back in the Marathon may score well for strength; but the third runner back may also score well because she ran with great determination.

The **style** is also considered. This evaluates the truth and grace of the athlete's movement. Truth and grace show, for instance, in how upright the athlete's posture is, and in the degree of ease and beauty with which she moves. The javelin might only have been thrown 2 javelin-lengths by Joan of Corinth, but the arc of its flight and the angle it landed at was excellent, and the throw itself was poised and graceful. Longer throws may rely on brute strength and score less on style.

These two aspects are considered together to give an overall evaluation.

The judges or the 'Archon' as they were known in ancient Greece, keep a careful note of each participant's efforts, and at the end of the day *every* participant is awarded a medal.

The medal could be awarded for winning an event, or for a quality that one athlete in particular demonstrated. (For example, 'John of Thebes, for Determination in the Marathon', or 'Sophie of Corinth for City Spirit in the Relay Race'.)

A simpler version is for the judging to be done by each City Leader/Counsellor watching her athletes train and perform and making note of a particular quality they display in a particular event.

I should also mention that no award is given for the City who won the most events: and surprisingly, this is hardly ever asked for either.

The Events

The events occur in the order described. In keeping with the Olympic tradition I have had live pipe or wooden flute music, played by a white-garbed and garlanded parent while the throwing, jumping and wrestling events are taking place. This has a remarkably calming and centring effect and also keeps activities such as wrestling from becoming too brutish. It amazes me how difficult it is to become aggressive when such beautiful music is being played!

The Feast

A feast is held at some time during the day. It is made possible by all the athletes' parents donating a plate of food, which of course is laid out on tables in a banqueting style. Music may be played and the Counsellor and helpers or trainers (known in Greece as the Paidotribes) from each city, play host to the athletes. The feast may take place in the middle of the day, so that the events continue afterwards; or it may take place a little latter in the afternoon, after all the events have finished. If it comes later, this gives the Counsellors and Paidatribes time to compile a list of awards, without the athletes becoming restless.

Poetry reading

In keeping with ancient tradition there may be an offering of poetry, composed and read by the athletes. They are encouraged to speak with a strong, clear yet musical voice. This is one of the most demanding of all the Olympic events and often produces very moving and beautiful works.

Closing Ceremony

The medals are ceremoniously given to the athletes. They are called by name and city and their outstanding quality is announced for all to hear. The Paidotribes and Counsellors award the medal. If it is a large gathering you may wish to divide the athletes into their separate cities – although around a central point such as the flame – and conduct the giving of the medals separately.

A verse is read, vowing the cities' friendship. (In Ancient Greece at the time of the Olympics a truce would be called between warring cities.) A story may be told: for instance, in Greece, when an Olympic winner returned home, his father would hammer a new doorway out of the wall, through which the athlete entered his house; after this it would be bricked up again so that no-one could step over the same threshold again.

Children at this age are naturally upright and graceful. Activities such as throwing the javelin and discus, running and long jump, make use of the athletes' present abilities; they can have the sense that now, for the first time, they are competing as individuals, that they are striving for beauty and excellence of movement, as well as physical prowess.

Coaching the athletes can draw upon the qualities of the four elements: earth (using weight and gravity), air (levity, flight and uprightness), water (grace and powerfully flowing movements), and fire (speed, effort, explosiveness) to help them improve and deepen their movements. For instance, I might say to Joe, 'A bit more fire in your run to the long jump would help you jump further' or 'Lovely air-element, Sarah!' when she throws the javelin in a beautiful arc.

Children at this age seem to have a natural relationship to this kind of guidance. The whole preparation, and then the actual day of the Olympics, is a part of their lives that they long remember and cherish. It forms a strong basis that can sustain and harmonise both their subsequent sporting activities and their approach to life itself.

The five Greek exercises prepare children for the 'sixth' exercise – that of the game and its modern expression, sport. They experience an archetypal way of moving and being, which can later help guide them in the difficult years of adolescence that lie ahead. The ability to be able to perceive and appreciate such qualities as truth, beauty and strength, and their shadow – untruth, ugliness and weakness of intent – will later metamorphose into an ability to make morally guided judgments in the teenage years and beyond. It is truly a *Golden Age!*

Chapter 9
Age 11-12

Twilight and dawn

At around the age of 11-12, children frequently enter a brief golden age of balance and harmony – within themselves and also with those around them.

As childhood begins to fade, the first dawning light of adolescence rises on the horizon; but for a while yet, the scales are equally balanced. Often at this age one can notice children developing a sense of justice and fairness – of democracy with one another. Whereas adults may previously often have been needed to intervene in a difficult group-situation, the children now become more capable of sorting things out themselves. A feeling of brother- and sisterhood often develops between classmates; the bonds and friendships they form at this nodal point – tinged with a dawning individuality of emotion, yet still embedded in the group-consciousness of the child – often remain important to them for many years to come.

By now children will have come fully into their bodies, but are not yet subject to the strong pull of gravity of adolescence. They inhabit the body in a harmonious, integrated way. It is worth savouring this moment. The pressures to 'grow up' are strong, but children at this age will actually feel relieved if their parents and teachers help and encourage them to stay children a little longer.

Over the years I've developed many games to meet the needs of the 11-12 year old. These are universally popular in whichever country they have been introduced. Children who have already received over-formalised sports-coaching respond particularly well, often visibly relaxing and enjoying the game.

185. CLAY PIGEONS

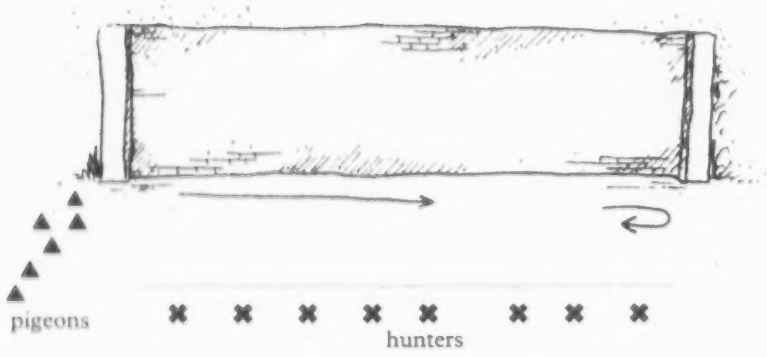
Equipment:
A practice volleyball/punctured tennis ball.

Play area: This game needs to be played near a wall, against which the ball can be bounced. Draw a line on the ground about 8-10 paces from the wall.

Divide the children into two teams: the hunters and the pigeons. The hunters have the ball. They stand behind the line and try to hit the pigeons as many times as possible.

The pigeons take it *in turns* to run along the wall, touching the far end before returning and tipping the next pigeon. While running they try to dodge the hunter's ball. They must keep going forward, and are not allowed to stand still.

If the hunters hit a pigeon, they get one point. When all the pigeons have had a turn to run, then the teams swap over (the hunters become the pigeons, and the pigeons become the hunters). The team with the most points wins.



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186. RUNNING THE GAUNTLET
(a variation of *Clay Pigeons)*

Equipment:
One practice volleyball or foam playball (or a punctured tennis ball if desperate). One glove, or beanbag, or coloured cloth (the gauntlet).

Play area:
Draw two lines at either end of the play area of about 30 x 25 paces for 20 players, or else use a confined space, e.g. a gymnasium or a hall, or a fenced-off tennis court.

Divide the children into two teams (nations, or armies). Team A stand scattered across the play area (battlefield) between the two lines.

Team B line up along one of the lines, the first player holding the gauntlet in her hand. She is given the ball, and starts the game by throwing it anywhere in the field that she wishes. She then runs across the battlefield, to touch the opposite wall and return, while at the same time dodging the ball, which Team A are trying to hit her with.

Runners are not allowed to move backwards or stop still at any time. When Player 1 returns to the home wall, she gives the gauntlet to the next member of Team B, and stands at the end of the line.

Team A uses the ball to try to hit the players of Team B as many times as possible. The members of Team A are not allowed to run with the ball but they are allowed to pass it among themselves.

Team A can hit the player 'running the gauntlet' as many times as they wish (or can!) – but they are not allowed to obstruct her path. Team A's hits are accumulated and remembered while each member of Team B takes a turn to 'run the gauntlet'.

When all the players of Team B have had a turn at running, the score is noted down, and Team B changes places with Team A. The team with the highest number of hits wins.

Variations

* Each player can decide whether she will run back immediately after touching the opposite wall, or wait. If she waits, she can only run once the ball has been thrown by the next player on Team B. (This is different from the game above, where only the first player throws the ball.)

  Or she can wait until the next, or the next etc. player throws the ball. (But she *has to* run when the last player throws the ball.)

  The players get 1 point if they run to the opposite wall, wait, and then to the home wall without getting hit; or 2 points if they manage to return without resting at the opposite wall. If a player is hit, she must return to the back of the line along the home wall.

* Instead of a gauntlet you may give the runner a 'sword' made of foam (a 2ft, or 60cm, length of foam pipe-insulation, or a cloth with a loose knot tied in the end.) The runner may now try to hit any of the throwing team with the sword, but she is not allowed to run backwards. Any of the throwing team hit by the sword are out and must leave the battlefield, only rejoining when it is their turn to run the gauntlet.

Around the age of 12, most children begin demanding precision – both of themselves and of others. In *Running the Gauntlet,* the players have to realise that they must throw in front of the runner and accurately in order to hit a moving target! When they were younger, they were not able to grasp the principle of throwing in anticipation of a moving object – but now, with their increasing ability for geometry, they can do this. Similarly in *Coupe* (game 212) they are putting into practice the intersection of lines in a geometrical way.

Running the Gauntlet has a David and Goliath aspect: a small, solitary individual facing a daunting and strong adversary. To do this requires courage. This is a wonderful game to play with groups that are involved with bullying – the bully will experience what it is like to be a victim when she runs through the 'battlefield' alone and defenceless under attack from a group of others. *Running the Gauntlet* is one of the most popular games that I play with 11-12 year olds; it releases many helpful social impulses, in spite of its blood-thirsty appearance.

187. SPACE BALL

This is another of the most popular games that I use. Although the instructions for playing it seem rather complicated when read, *Space Ball* is a game that uses many of the rules of modern ball sports. So persist – you will be well rewarded! Be aware, though, that to referee this game requires your full attention, as the game moves very quickly, and disputes can easily arise.

Equipment: one volley ball

Divide the group into two teams. The aim of the game is to throw the ball 10 times uninterrupted between team members.

The referee counts the successful throws, starting at 1 again every time the throws are interrupted, or the ball dropped. Each time this happens, the ball is handed over to the opposition team.

Some rules:

- No running with the ball.
- When a player has the ball, she can pivot round, using one foot as an anchor.
- Space rule: No physical contact with the other players. Players should keep at arm's length away from the others, or at double arm's length. (Decide on this before beginning the game.) A player can prove that someone is 'in her space' in the following way. If Jane, of Team A has the ball, and can touch Andrew of Team B while holding the ball in two hands and not moving her feet, Team A gets an extra point.
- A penalty point can be awarded if any physical contact occurs.
- Deliberate bounce passing is allowed.
- All passes must be more than a double arm's length.
- **Pass back rule:** A player cannot pass back to the person who threw to her.
- If a throw is deflected, but is caught without it dropping to the ground, play continues. (See optional rules.)
- A 'space foul' can be committed if an opposition player intrudes on another by cutting across her space (two arm lengths) in order to intercept the ball.

The ball is awarded to the opposite team when:
- it is dropped
- it is knocked to the ground
- it is caught by a member of the opposite team

Optional rules:

- Boys can only throw to girls, girls only to boys.
- 'Hot potato' rule: Players can only hold the ball for a maximum of 3 seconds.
- If a player of the defending team catches a deflected ball, the defending team 'inherits' the other team's total, which is called 'capturing the points'. For instance, Team A has 6 counts, but on the seventh throw the ball is deflected and caught by John of Team B. John now throws the ball to another person from Team B, and this is Team B's count of 7. Team A will have to start at 1 again, unless they can catch a deflected throw.

You may find that students playing *Space Ball* tend to bunch up rather than spreading out over the whole playing area. To work with this, you can award double or triple points for a long pass; or divide the area into sections, and indicate who from each team must remain within these areas.

As developed by Jaimen McMillan

188. HOOP BALL

Equipment: 4 hoops

Each team is designated two hoops. Two players from Team A and two from Team B each stand in a hoop. Follow the rules as for *Space Ball* – but to score a full 10 points, the teams have to throw at least 2

successful passes to their respective team-mates in the hoops during the 10 passes. The two members of either team standing in a hoop can pass to one another if they wish.

Variation
The four players in the hoops are 'neutral', but in order to score 10, each hoop player must catch the ball.

189.BENCH BALL

Equipment: Two benches and a play ball

Play area: The two benches are set one at either end of the hall or playground.

Each team is designated a bench. One player from each team stands on their team's bench. The other players must try to throw the ball to the bench person – if successful, then the team gets a point. Each team tries to prevent the ball reaching the bench person of the opposite team.

If the bench person falls off the bench when catching the ball, no point is awarded. When a point is awarded, the other team is given the ball. The team with the most points wins.

Adapt the rules from *Space Ball* freely to suit this game – for instance, no physical contact, the other team is awarded the ball if it is dropped, etc.

Bench Ball specifically prepares the children for playing basketball. In this game, however, instead of throwing the ball into the basket, the players throw it to their bench-player. When the player who wishes to shoot sees a defending player in front of the bench, the only way to score is to throw the ball in an arc over the defending player's head. The only way a defending player can prevent the opposite team scoring is by jumping up and intercepting the ball – since the player on the bench is so much higher.

When the children begin to get used to playing this, you will find that they inevitably place taller players on the bench and also use them for guarding the opposite team's bench. This means that the smaller players have more playing time with the ball; which, if you launch straight into basketball would never happen; the taller players would tend to dominate the game. I try, as far as possible, to let the children discover their own strategies for winning (e.g. to put a tall player on the bench) – it gives them satisfaction and confidence in their own abilities.

190. MAT BALL

Equipment: Two crash-mats – placed at either end of the play area.

Follow the rules and layout for *Bench Ball*, except now the players representing the 'baskets' stand on crash-mats instead of benches.

191. HOT BALL

Equipment: 4 floor-mats/blankets/square marked areas – 3 by 6 paces.
A ball that can bounce well on the mats – e.g. a volley ball.

Follow the rules for *Space Ball*. However, to score, the ball has to be 'hot'. A player can make the ball 'hot' for her team by catching it with two hands, while she has one foot flat against the wall.

Once the ball is made 'hot' by a team, this team can try and score. To score in this game, the 'hot' ball must be bounced onto a mat, and then caught by another member of the same team. As soon as a 'hot' ball is intercepted, caught or touched by the opposite team, it is no longer 'hot', and must be made 'hot' again.

No one is allowed to touch the mats. Once a point is scored, the ball is given to the other team, who must try and make it 'hot' before scoring.

When teaching games, it is often difficult to prevent the players forming a cluster around the ball. *Hot Ball* is a version of *Space Ball* which encourages players to spread themselves across the play area.

Related by Rob Sim

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192. WALL BALL

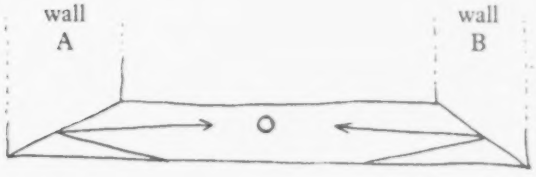
In *Wall Ball*, points are awarded to the team which touches the ball against their wall. Adapt the basic rules of *Space Ball* to suit this game.

Begin with the two teams standing on the side of the play area. Number each player (for this example, I will assume 8 children in each team).

Place the ball on the floor in the centre of the play area. Call out 4 numbers, e.g. 1, 3, 5, 7! Players 1,3,5 and 7 from each team run first to their wall, and touch it, and then to the ball which I roll first to one side, then to another, so that the players do not collide in an attempt to be the first to reach it.

From then on the usual rules of Space Ball apply – but now, to score a point, a player must stand with two feet on the ground, both hands on the ball, and touch the ball against their wall.

When a point is scored, the players return to their team, and the leader places the ball in the centre of the area, and calls another 4 numbers.



Variation

Calling out numbers is just one way of limiting the number of players on the court, which is particularly useful when a group is learning to play such a game, and it helps weaker players to participate. However, there are many other ways of doing this – invent your own!

193. TARGET BALL

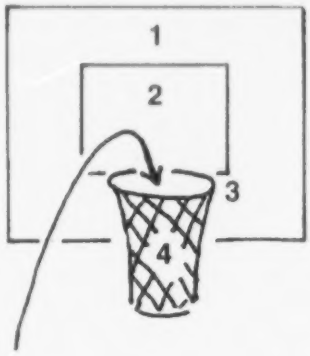
Target Ball, another variation of *Space Ball*, is also a preparatory game for basketball. It encourages all children to try to shoot at the basket, and dribbling can be introduced. To encourage the players to include weaker members of their teams, I have a rule that, for instance, Johnny on Team A, and Gemma on Team B are 'doublers' – if they score anything, their points are doubled. However, only a doubler can mark a doubler (otherwise poor Johnny will be swamped by the hefty and/or agile opposition!).

Equipment:
A practice volleyball – when the children are stronger, you can introduce a real basketball.

Play area:
A basketball court. Alternatively, anywhere where there are two basketball hoops and backboards.

Follow the rules for *Space Ball*, but the throws and catches are not counted up. Instead, the scoring depends on how accurately the teams shoot at the basketball ring:

1 point for hitting the back board
2 points for hitting the black square
3 points for hitting the ring
4 points for making a basket



Variation

Allow the players to bounce the ball three times (basketball dribbling). As long as the ball is within the player's own space, no intercepting is allowed.

At this age I choose teams to prevent exclusion and favouritism. *Space Ball* is a useful game for 12 year olds; they no longer want to play nursery games, nor are they old enough for conventional sports. At this time, competitive sports are premature; the 12 year old has not developed enough as an individual to be able to handle the stresses involved. *Space Ball* is an intermediate team game which draws on and develops the children's present physical abilities and spatial awareness. This game (and its variations) will prepare them for other sports.

Year after year I have been astounded at the flowering of unblemished physical beauty in children of this age. The heaviness and self-consciousness of puberty have, for the most part, not arrived; yet the children are now strong enough to run, jump and throw. Also, boys and girls are still able to compete equally.

At this age it is particularly important to instil a sense of beauty in the students: beauty of spirit as well as body. They want, of course, to measure their physical abilities; but if encouraged, will also come to realise and appreciate the importance of *inner* qualities. This is why, at this age, I have encouraged an 'Olympic Day' at the schools where I have taught, modelled on the Ancient Greek games.

I also invite other groups of children from neighbouring schools to come and participate.

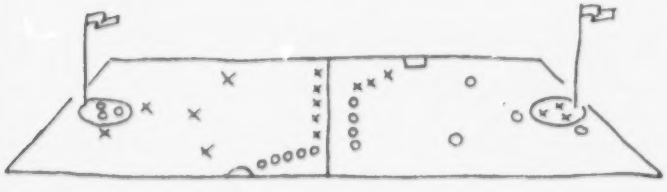
194. STORM THE CASTLE

'Once there were two kingdoms, side by side, separated only by a fast-flowing river. Both kingdoms had powerful and rich rulers, who governed their people from the stronghold of their castles. Now for many years these two kingdoms had been at war with each other – as both kings were greedy and wished to rule both kingdoms as one.

Day after day the soldiers would face each other over the fast flowing river – and occasionally the braver of the men would show their courage by venturing over it and into enemy territory, in an attempt to storm the castle and capture the enemy's flag. Sometimes they would be made prisoner by the enemy, and thrown into the prison; but at other times they managed to break through the enemy's ranks and – with the help of their fellow soldiers who distracted the enemy forces – would storm the castle, and capture the flag. But alas, on the journey back through the enemy's land, they rarely failed to escape the enemy – then the flag was returned and the brave soldiers were sentenced to prison. But sometimes the most courageous and swift of men would manage to get back across the river without the enemy noticing – and then the enemy kingdom was conquered!'

Equipment:
Two hoops.
Two 'flags' – in different colours.
Bibs/vests or sashes to distinguish the teams.

Play area:
About the size of a small soccer pitch for 30-35 players. This game works best on a large field – you can mark out the areas with rope.



- Divide the players into two teams: The Blue Army and the Orange Army for example.
- One or two soldiers from each team are the guards, and stand in front of their team's castle, protecting the flag from attack. No more than two guards are allowed.
- The rest of the army line up on their side of the river (the centre line), facing the enemy.
- Any soldier can venture over the river – or the enemy can try to drag her over the water by issuing a challenge to join hands and have a human 'tug of war'. If they succeed, then they send her to prison.
- Any player pulled over or tagged must immediately place her hands on her head while crossing the battlefield, so as to be identified as already caught.
- If more than one soldier is made prisoner, they start to form a chain from the prison towards their home kingdom, with the first prisoner closest to home, and the most recently captured prisoner closest to the prison.
- A soldier can only be freed from prison when a member of her own army manages to get across the river and into enemy territory without being tagged, takes the imprisoned soldier by the hand and runs back to her own side.
- If they are caught then both become prisoners and go to the back of the chain.
- A team may appoint only one prison guard. This guard can only attempt to recapture a prisoner by starting from the sentry box -which is a hoop 10 paces away from the prison. This gives the prisoners a fair chance to escape.
- Any number of soldiers can enter enemy territory at any time.
- Once inside the enemy's castle a soldier may stay there for as long as she likes and is safe from being tagged; but once she leaves the castle and tries to make a run back to her own castle, she is not allowed to return to the enemy's castle to avoid being tagged.
- Any number of soldiers are allowed in the enemy's castle at one time. In fact this is a good tactic because the castle guard is then unsure who will try to make a break for freedom.
- The runner who has the flag may not try to conceal it as she tries to run back to her own castle.
- If she succeeds in carrying the flag back, the opposing players who may have been successful in getting into her castle, may not run out and tag her as she approaches. If this were to happen the game would seldom come to a conclusion.
- Opposing players who are giving chase to the flag carrier may invade the opposition's side, but then have the power only to tag the flag carrier, not any of the opposition soldiers.
- The opposition soldiers may tag any invading attacker who has come over the river in pursuit of the flag carrier, hence protecting the flag carrier and helping her to get back to her own castle.

The aim is to capture the flag by storming the castle, and to take the flag back safely to one's own kingdom. The army who manages this first, wins.
When the children are 11 and turning 12, they are ready for games in which two teams face each other. The players are strong enough in themselves to face the enemy, and will enjoy this new way of playing. It is also good at this age to introduce games which require more 'formation'.

195. DOUBLE TROUBLE

Equipment:
Two practice volleyballs or soft foam balls.

Play area:
Net and lines as for a volleyball court: 18 x 9 paces.

You can mark out the play area with a long rope, or with anything handy – clothing or whatever. If you don't have a net, a rope strung between two poles (or trees, drain-pipes etc.) can be used.

Level 1
Divide the group into two teams. Team A starts with the ball. A player throws it over the net and wins a point if the other team lets it fall to the ground. Then Team B throws the ball, and the same scoring applies. However, the ball must not go out of the lines, or into the net. If this happens, then the opposite team (i.e. the team that was to receive the ball) is awarded a point.

Any member of either team can throw or catch the ball – but players must not pass the ball to one another. Players are not allowed to move from where they caught the ball. Play continues until one team reaches 20.

Level 2
Introduce a second ball: so that at any one time there are two balls being thrown or caught. This speeds the game up considerably!

Hint to leader:
You will have to exercise your perfect peripheral vision to keep score in this game when two balls are being used! (I usually stand at the net and listen carefully for the ball hitting the floor.)

Not only does this game provide the children with a fun way to practice throwing and catching; it also requires quick footwork. When the ball is approaching, the feet have to move quickly in response. This is another game that is preparatory for sports such as netball and basketball, and yet does not 'overshoot' into premature competitive sport.

You will be well rewarded if you persevere with the following game, *Go Tag*. In spite of its apparent complication on paper, it is actually a very simple game, and passes the 'acid test' with flying colours (which for me is whether the children want to play it for hours). Basically, the game involves one team trying to cross from one side of the play area to the other without getting tipped by the other team's members.

196. OVER THE GARDEN WALL

Play area: Volleyball court 18 x 9m

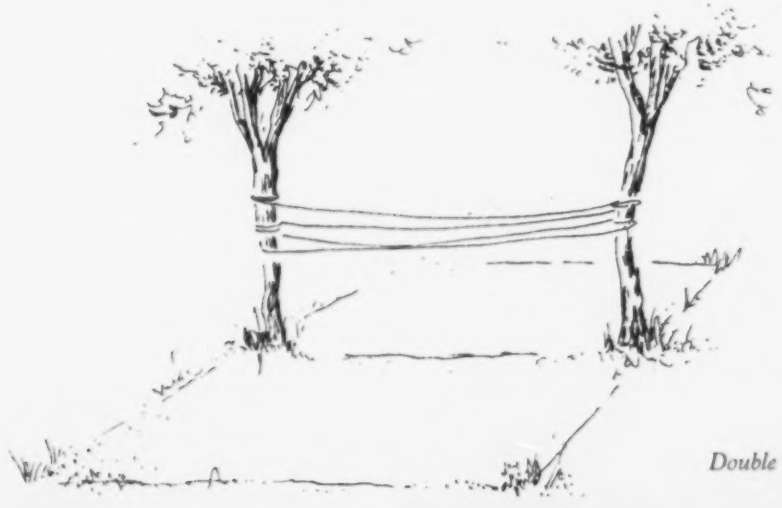
Equipment: Volleyball net.
Many play- and volleyballs – at least one each.

Follow the rules for *Double Trouble* but this time you begin the game with every player holding a ball. On the signal to start, the players throw the balls over the net onto the other side of the court. In this case it does not matter if they go in or out, as long as the players get them over.

The player who has just thrown his ball then retrieves another ball and throws it over. Meanwhile the other team will have done the same thing. This is repeated over and over again.

The teams try to clear their court of as many balls as possible by throwing them back over on to the other team's court. No-one may hold a ball for more than three seconds (hot-potato rule).

At the end of a set period of time, perhaps two minutes, the leader calls 'STOP!' No more balls may be thrown. The leader then counts the number of balls on each side. The team with the fewest balls on its side wins.

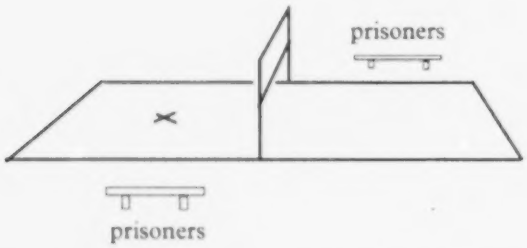


Double Trouble

197. VOLLEY PRISONER

Equipment: A volleyball.

Play this game using a net and court-lines as for volleyball. Somewhere in the centre of each side of the net (depending on how far the weakest child in the group can throw the ball to get it over the net) make a chalk cross to mark the place the children must serve from. If you're playing outdoors, you can use a rope to form the lines.



Divide the players into two teams. Player 1 from Team A throws the ball from the serving place. Before the ball goes over the net, she calls the name of one of the players on Team B, in a loud voice.

If the ball is caught by *any member* of Team B, she throws it back and calls the name of one of the players of Team A. Continue in this way until the ball is either:

- dropped by a member of the catching team. If this happens, the named player is out, *not* the player who drops the ball. The named player becomes a 'prisoner' and stands to the side of the court (see illustration for where the prisoners stand).
- the ball is thrown into the net or outside the boundary lines. If this happens, the thrower becomes a prisoner and stands on the side of the court.

It is important that the prisoners stand (or sit) in a line, so that it is clear who became a prisoner first. (The prisoner who has been in her team's prison longest is always the first to be released.)

In order to release Prisoner 1 from Team B (i.e. the first prisoner in team B's prisoner line, her team must throw the ball over the net and call loudly 'Prisoner!' (instead of the name of one of Team A's players). If the ball is dropped or hits the ground inside the boundary lines then the prisoner first in line can re-enter the game.

If a prisoner is released and re-enters the game, her name may not immediately be called until another of her team has become a 'prisoner'. This is to prevent one player spending all her time as a prisoner.

A team may not call 'prisoner' twice in a row in a rally. In other words the children must alternate their calls between naming a player on the other side and calling prisoner. If they do call prisoner twice, the player who called out the second 'prisoner' is out and herself becomes a prisoner. This is an important rule as it helps bring about a resolution in the game, and makes it more exciting.

The game is won by either:

- making all the opposing team go to prison.
- setting a time limit after which the leader counts up prisoners.

Whichever team has captured the most prisoners wins.

Variations

1. Allow two passes amongst team members each time the ball comes over to their side.

2. The ball must be 'set' * over the net in volleyball style. This is best done by allowing two passes. The receiver of the second pass throws the ball high in the air so that a team-mate can 'set' or 'volley' the ball over the net.

3. The ball may be 'dug' * by any player - especially when a ball is first received from the opposing team:
   i.e. one player digs,
   next player catches and throws,
   third player sets over the net.

4. You may even allow a bounce dig.* This is good as it takes away the danger of hurting arms.

5. A player can 'catch-set'*

6. The teams have a row of players near the net who catch-set, and a back row who catch-dig.*

7. Have a 'hot potato' rule – no player can hold the ball for more than 3 seconds at any time.

8. Instead of calling names, a score is kept. (This is a more advanced version of this game.)

9. The 'revenge' rule: if a player has just become a prisoner, before she leaves the court she is allowed one more throw from the serving line. If she succeeds in getting someone out on the other side then she may stay on court. If she does not then she must leave the court and become a prisoner.

10. If only two players are left on a team, they can release one of their prisoners by catching the ball successfully three times.

11. As fewer and fewer players are left on the court, you can 'shrink' the area of play.

* see Glossary of Terms

198. SKITTLE PRISONER

This a major variation which can be adapted from any of the volleyball games such as *Newcombe* (game 139), and *Air Raid* (game 200).

For example, you may play a game with the rules identical to those in *Newcombe*); but each player places a skittle on the ground. If her skittle is hit by a ball or knocked over by one of her team mates, she is out. This involves not only catching the ball but also being aware of where you are treading.

I developed this game when I visited an inner city school, which only had a ball and a long rope (and a lot of social problems!). When I visited again two years later, *Volley Prisoner* was played passionately by the 10, 11, 12 and 13 year olds, in every available space. In fact, the children had invented the 'revenge' rule (Variation 9). The school still had no sports equipment; but I suspect the social problems had been helped in a small way!

In most games the children with less ability are isolated, or go out: this is when you see 'practical' Darwinism in the worst sense. This is not healthy or helpful for either the skilled or the less skilled players – it gives both groups an anti-social experience. Including less skilled players in a team does not mean that one does not strive for excellence – each individual in the team should still strive to play to the best of her **own** ability; no-one needs to feel inhibited.

In the game described above, the best players almost invariably go out first – the ball is often thrown not towards, but away from them. The less skilled and less involved players tend to spend the most time on the court, often being left to defend the team's honour! If they succeed in saving the game by winning a prisoner, this prisoner is usually one of the stronger players – and they'll get a real cheer for this. If they don't succeed, then the game ends, and everyone gets to be back on the court for the beginning of a new game.

However, the less able players have had a lot of practice (something they don't usually get in many games) and have tried with all their strength to protect their team. I have seldom heard anything but unaccustomed praise for the less able at the end of this game.

199. BLIND PRISONER

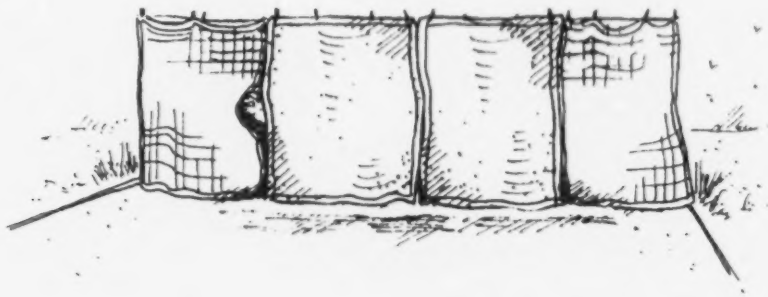
This is also a very fast game – children receive some fitness training by engaging in it, and it also requires very quick thinking. It gives expression to the children's increasing capacity for sharpened thinking and reflexes, which becomes noticeable at this age.

Equipment: A volleyball. Crash-mats or blankets and pins.

Play area:
Play this game on a volleyball court with net. Either use crash-mats leaning against the net, or blankets pinned to the net, so that the teams cannot see each other. Make sure blankets touch the ground, to prevent the teams peeking underneath!

Divide the children into two teams. Follow the rules for *Prisoner.* The difference is that the children now have to remember who is left on the other team, for the screen prevents them seeing. Make sure that the children who are prisoners are not visible to the opposing team. (They can sit at the back line of the court.)

Two rules which you can use at your own discretion:
- Players are not allowed to pass the ball to another person in their own team once they have caught a throw.
- Players are not allowed to try to disguise their voices.



200. AIR RAID

This is a variation of *Blind Prisoner* – so use the same equipment. However a cloth covered ball is especially good as it cannot be heard when it hits the ground.

Follow the rules for *Blind Prisoner,* except no names are called out. The teams thus wait in silence for the 'air raid'. I use this metaphor to describe how a person goes out: when a 'bomb' (the ball) hits the ground, it explodes and kills the nearest person (who then sits out for the rest of the game).

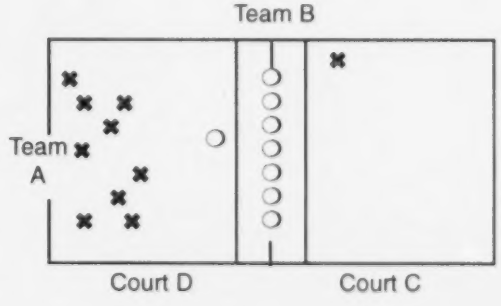
No player may dive out of the way of an incoming bomb; she must try to catch it. The game ends when one team has no more players left on the court.

These two games never fail to appeal to children. They seem to love playing 'blind'. This is an awakening game for 12-year olds: the dreamy children will probably have a struggle to catch the ball successfully, but the effort of trying not to dream will help them. *Air Raid* is characterised by outer stillness (the children will not be running around very much) and by inner activity (each person on the team has to be awake and concentrating – otherwise they will not be able to catch the 'bomb'!). Quick reflex action is a help, but not usually enough – the children must be really present and attentive. I suppose this game could be described as a type of human computer game with its unpredictable 'bombs'; but instead of using finger reflexes only, *Air Raid* requires a more holistic state of awareness and wakefulness – the players have to be ready with their whole body to move and catch the ball. They also have to be inwardly ready to respond to something they are not able to see in advance. They do not know how or when the bomb will appear. In a sense this is a picture of how they are feeling: at 12 they are on the threshold of puberty. They know change is coming, but they have no clear picture of what this will be like, or when it will come.

As related by Rob Sim

201. GO TAG

Play area: 25 x 20 paces for 25 players.



Draw a line across the centre of the play area, and one either side of this line, about 3 paces away from the centre.

Divide the players into two teams – Team A (the running team) and Team B (the chasing team).

Team A lines up on the far end of the play area. Team B lines up along the centre line, the first player facing Team A, the second player with her back to Team A, the third facing, etc. so that each player faces alternate directions.

The leader starts the game by walking on the far side of Team B, and touches a player on the shoulder who is facing Team A. This player is the first tipper.

The first tipper tries to catch players from Team A, who run around the side of the line formed by Team B, to the opposite court (Court C), while trying to avoid getting caught.

Team A are safe from the chaser once they're in Court C. Once they reach Court C, they run back to Court D, trying not to get tipped.

The tipper is not allowed to cross the centre line. So when a tipper (Amy) facing Court D has chased all of Team A into Court C, she then touches the back of another player of Team B (who is facing Court C). This player now runs forward to try and tip Team A. Amy takes this new tipper's place along the centre line, this time facing Court C. When a player is tipped, she must sit out.

A running player who crosses the middle line safely must run at least 5 paces away from the middle line before she can again cross back to the other side. You may wish to mark this line with chalk. Otherwise a player could simply hop from one side to the other and never get caught.

Another rule that will prevent hopping backward and forward is that if you run around one side of the line to escape, you must go to the other side the next time you swap sides.

When all the running team's players are out, the teams swap over (in our example, Team A will now line up alternately along the centre line).

To make this game *even more* exciting, you can time how long it takes each team to tip all the players of the running team.

This is a game that requires a clear formation: a team is only likely to succeed if it keeps a good formation and applies thought or strategy. I will sometimes send the teams off to plan their strategy – and I am always surprised how involved they get in discussing tactics. The conversation may begin with some simple remark like 'Well, I think we should all run as fast as we can!', which will lead to more complicated planning. Also, this provides an opportunity for Annie to complain 'I never get the chance to tip!' – and the others may well give her more turns.

As related by Martin Baker

202. BIRD IN A CAGE

Equipment: wooden staffs – one for each player

One person starts off as the bird. She stands in the centre of the circle. The other players form the circle, by standing and holding their staffs upright, resting their fingers lightly on the top of the staff. They should stand so that there is about 1 foot (30cm) between each staff. The staffs form the bird's cage.

At a signal, each person moves to the next staff without letting it fall. If a staff falls, the bird tries to escape by trying to touch the fallen staff. If she succeeds, then the person who failed to catch the staff becomes the new bird, and the old bird takes her place.

Variations

You have to miss out one staff and catch the next one.

If someone fails to catch a staff successfully, and the bird escapes, the person who left the staff behind her is the next bird, not the person who dropped it.

203. PAPER BOATS

Equipment: One playball per player.
One big heavy ball. A lightweight medicine ball is ideal, or a semi-deflated basketball will do.

The aim of the game is to throw the balls at the bigger ball, hitting it and knocking it over the opposing side's line.

Place the heavy ball, the 'boat', in the middle of the playing area, the 'pond'. Divide up the players into two teams.

Each team takes 6-8 paces back from the boat. They are now standing on the edge of the pond. Draw a chalk line at the edge of the pond for each team. Draw another across the middle of the pond.

Give each player a ball, the 'stone'. On the call 'Paper boats!', the players throw their stone and try to hit the boat and knock it to the edge of the opposing team's side of the pond (the line). They may retrieve any ball on their side of the pond and try over and over again to hit the boat over to the other side.

No player can step over the line marking the edge of the pond to throw their ball. A player may go into the pond on her team's side to retrieve a stone that is stuck. But she must then return to the edge to throw it. No player may touch the boat with her hand to prevent it crossing the line.

The game is over when the boat touches the line marking the edge of either team's pond.

204. WAKING AND SLEEPING

Equipment:
Two floor mats (the beds)
6 playing balls (the dreams)

Play area: 35 x 25 paces (a small basketball court)

The object of the game is to try to steal the opposite team's power by removing all their dreams (play balls) without getting tipped; or by imprisoning (sending into a nightmare) all their players.

Divide the group into two teams. They stand on their respective beds (the floor mats) at either end of the field (play area).

The basic rule of the game is: *whoever runs into the field later than the opponent has the right to tag because she has had more sleep and is therefore more powerful .*

Players are safe when they are on their own 'beds'. The game begins when the leader calls out '**Wake up!**'. Players leave the bed and try to steal the dreams of the other team or act as bait to the opposing players, who have had more sleep.

However, when leaving the bed, players must watch to see who has more power than themselves – so that they can return to the bed if chased.

If Player A is tipped by Player B with more power, she is sent to Team A's nightmare (on the side of the field, near Team B's bed: see picture). When another player from Team A is tipped, she forms a chain by holding hands with Player A, at the back of the line. This chain is called the 'Nightmare'.

A player may free her 'nightmared' team-mates one at a time by tipping the player nearest to the field-end of the chain, and then returning to the bed before setting out to free another. When a prisoner has been freed, she must return to her team's bed straight away, and cannot be tipped until she leaves the bed again.

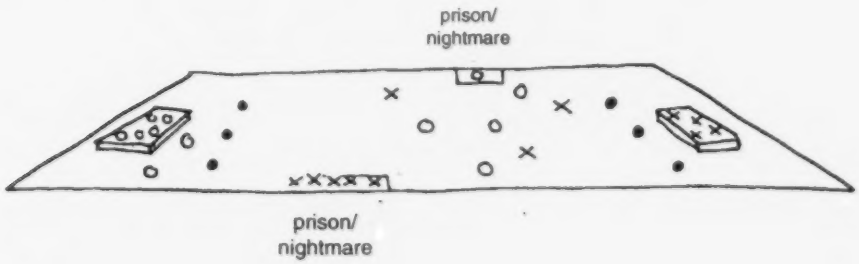
When a dream has been taken, it is carried to the victorious team's bed. The game ends when all three of the opposite team's dreams have been captured.

Variation
If four, or a designated number of prisoners are caught and a fifth one tipped, the game is lost, and the other team has won.

This game has the potential either to be well-formed or to erupt into chaos, which reflects the inner potential of the 12 year old. It also requires a balanced sense of self-sacrifice. Children have to learn to be able to sometimes compromise their own wishes, to accommodate those of others. If they don't, both they and the group will suffer. In this game, the players have to find a balance between going too far out of themselves, and remaining too far in. It is very healthy to achieve this harmony before puberty sets in. At this age there is a last burst of childhood before the weight of adolescence begins in earnest.

Many things happen at once in this game – and the child has to find her own place within a confusing situation. This is a reflection of what's to come: the adolescent, venturing into the world must find her own place. *Waking and Sleeping* also appeals to the children's sense of initiative – they have to move towards an aim (capturing the opposite team's dreams), but must still remain observant, noticing who can be tipped, and who can tip them! As in previous games, neither the over-cautious child nor the over-confident child will be very successful. This encourages children either to harness or activate their will themselves, depending on what they most need.

Being able to return to the bed allows the child a chance to 'breathe', and to reorientate herself before rushing forward again.



Part Three

Beyond the Doorway

A movement programme for teenagers

Chapter 10
Age 12-13 and upwards

Around the twelfth year children build on an inner sense of form. Their relationship to form grows into a need for 'formation' – a striving to know where their place is in the whole. A balance between the group and the individual is now explored more dynamically. If this is done in a manner that does not give way to chaos, yet encourages individual expression, the children will not only flow into the game but satisfy a deep longing that greatly assists them as they move into puberty.

Many of the games at this age use this sense of 'formation', which is expressed in the way the players position and conduct themselves in the game. It is important that the teacher or leader encourages the children's need for strong team formation, yet without sliding into over-formalised sport, where team-form is used merely in order to win. If this happens, a vital developmental step will have been missed out; and whilst a number of the more physically capable players will, outwardly at least, seem happy, some players in the group will be dissatisfied and resist the game.

PLAY VERSUS SPORT

It is understandably easy to be misled if you watch children in their free play at around 12 years old: they seem naturally drawn toward sport. But closer observation usually reveals two things – firstly, they are 'playing *with* sport', not 'playing *the* sport'. In other words they are not yet playing out of a strong sense of self-consciousness, as adults do. That is, of course, unless they have been put in sporting teams and been over-trained. *This is a fundamental misunderstanding of what children need at this age.* Left to their own devices, children will often invent complex rules, imagine great crowds watching, and give a running commentary on the action taking place. The backyard may be Wembley Stadium one day, the Superbowl or the Melbourne Cricket Ground the next, in a wonderful blending of the imaginative, creative play of childhood with formalised, stylised, teenage and adult sport. This is a stepping stone into adolescence that must be nurtured, not undermined by over-coaching.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Initiation

Every society has in the past had 'initiation ceremonies'. These 'rites of passage' came at important times of change, giving adolescents recognition and an outer formalised structure. Can it be a coincidence that the increasing popularity of sport in modern Western culture has come at a time when there is a marked decline in the more formal structures that had influence over our daily lives – such as school, church and family?

Sport can of course be a positive substitute for initiation, providing many values and structures that help a young person define himself. But one vital question must be addressed. If sport is a metamorphosis of initiation, in which certain rites were performed deliberately at certain ages to give confidence to face approaching challenges, how can it be healthy that seven or eight year-olds engage in sporting activities identical to those of teenagers; and that teenagers' activities are identical with those of adults? We see lip-service paid to the needs of different age-groups – in such things as the heights of goals, size of fields and minor rule adjustments – but the basic method of playing a particular game is undeniably uniform, regardless of age.

We complain about the way children are nowadays, and the violence and social breakdown they have to face, so we send them prematurely into battle on the sports field to 'prepare them' – not recognizing we may be incubating the very qualities that we fear.

We are in danger of losing any insight into what is appropriate at varying stages of development, of breeding 'adult-ified' children whose childhood has been stolen or at the very least ignored by this generation of adults; we bear a good deal of responsibility, because ours is probably the last generation to have some recollection of what it was like to be allowed the precious freedom to play – simply, unselfconsciously and creatively.

Cultivating negotiation

Each sport has a strict code of conduct, communication and negotiation. These rules and tactics often fill hundreds of pages of detailed and complex manuals. *Externalisation* of the inner need for convention, which these rules represent, has a very specific formative effect on the individual who is subject to them. At certain stages in life, such regulations and conditions may, though we are unaware of it, be precisely what we need to enrich or help us. Each sport has a different quality, or 'feel' to it, which may appeal to different individuals at certain times in their lives. But prior to puberty, children benefit from a much broader and more flexible set of boundaries in their play, which is, at that stage still, a more inward and creative process. The game is not yet an external event, as it becomes later in adolescence. It is still intrinsically bound up with the child's inner experience of life. The rules that govern the child's play therefore spring from within his own creativity. When he plays with others, he must learn also to take into account their creativity and need for expression. 'Space' is negotiated with the others in the game. In a game of marbles, for instance, delicate and complex negotiations are gone through before play begins. What rules, what size marbles, the value of certain special marbles and what they may be exchanged for, and so on, all have to be agreed. These arrangements often involve passionate argument and problem-solving skills; what is crucially important in this process, though, is that each child meets the other in freedom, and that the outcome is therefore unique to the players involved. In this way children learn both tolerance and the ability to speak up for what they want; they develop the capacities that they already possess as potential.

Contrast this with the external, fixed demands which formalised sport places on young children, and there can be little doubt which kind of activity will help foster healthy, balanced development.

Abdication of authority

Before children reach puberty, adults usually apply *creative* authority to guide their offsprings' lives. Afterwards, agreements reached through negotiation become progressively more common. The guidelines we give to meet the individual needs of our children spring from *ourselves as individuals*. When children get involved in formalised sport at this age, parents and teachers often say that they encourage it because it teaches them to obey authority and work as a team. While this may be superficially true, we also need to ask whose authority it is that they are learning to obey. When we involve children in formalised sport too early, we are partially abdicating our own individual creative authority. We are unconsciously communicating to them that the external, outer form of authority is of greater importance than developing an inner moral sense of right and wrong. This could not come at a more sensitive time in the child's biography. At this stage, a great deal of what will later develop into the personality of the teenager and adult is formed. If we want to raise children with an inner knowledge of what is true and just, then we must question whether pre-puberty sport will help or hinder this.

Adult transference

As adults we need to look at why we want our children to be involved so early in sport. The reasons will vary of course, but do we need to explore our own motives? Could it be that the increasing competitiveness of the adult world is leading us to seek an outlet for our frustrations through the success of our children? Are we wanting them to succeed where we have not? Do we find an external authority in sport that we ourselves are not confident to develop within schools and family life? Do we simply place children in sporting teams because that is what is expected of us by our peers? Or is it an attempt to have 'the son follow in the father's footsteps', by encouraging him to take part in the same game that we played and enjoyed at school? If any of these questions have validity then we must surely ponder whether we are projecting our own fears and aspirations onto our children.

Sport as a positive influence

This is not meant to be a rejection of sport's powerful and positive influence in teenagers' lives. Sport does provide an external form that young people at this stage also need. It offers valuable opportunity for self expression, role modelling, safe social situations; it can help form 'work ethics' through training, acceptance of external authority, and engagement in an activity with intensity and concentration.

But parents often feel excluded or powerless about the selection of which sport, and in particular which team, their son or daughter should join. The choice of the team cannot be separated from the coach who will be in charge of it. Here is a list of qualities to look for when making this choice ...

A COACHING CHECK LIST FOR PARENTS

* Does the coach encourage fair play and a sense of sporting 'honour' and self control?

* Does he place more emphasis on winning or participation? Is he willing to select the players that give their best for the team as opposed to those who are gifted but may be selfish and unreliable?

* Is he aware of the social dynamic in the group and can he relate on a deeper level to some of the issues that he may be confronted with? Is he active in organising social as well as sporting events for the team and their friends and families?

* Is he a good role model? Your son or daughter may identify strongly with the way the coach lives. Are you comfortable with this?

* Does he over-train and over-exert the players?

* Does he take winning and losing personally and transfer his frustrations onto the players?

* Does he encourage a positive self-image of all players and affirm their strengths as well as attempting to improve their weaknesses?

* Does he give too much attention to the 'star' of the team, neglecting the others?

* Is he willing to relate to, and not exclude, the parents of the players?

Of course not all coaches are going to score 100%, they are human and have strengths and weaknesses like everyone. However, they are in a powerful and responsible position, and need to be able to cultivate the qualities within themselves that they wish for their players. To 'do as I say, not as I do' is not acceptable to teenagers. This is why it is important to involve yourself in the team that your child chooses. You may then be able to identify any serious problems that arise and be active in solving them.

CHILDREN IN MARTIAL ARTS:
THE COST

The number of children taking part in martial arts is rapidly growing. All around the world, armies of baggy, white-clad children are being dropped off at local recreation centres, to be picked up an hour or two later. Parents are unwittingly helping to prime emotional time-bombs which will explode in adolescence with shock waves that last for many years.

Martial arts have their origins in ancient times. They were developed out of deep esoteric and religious practices, involving rigorous and repetitive meditation, spiritual instruction, self-denial, and strict diets. All of this was overseen by masters, often monks who had devoted their entire existence to a spiritual path. These mystery centres were often cut off from large population areas, in monastery-type situations. However, there were three crucial aspects to such training. Firstly the students were seeking self-development through esoteric, spiritual disciplines. Secondly their aim was to understand the subtle energy flowing within the body, and its relationship to the spiritual dimension. Thirdly, they were young *adults*.

Contrast this with what is happening today. Children are exposed to an increasing level of explicit violence, particularly communicated by music and the media. The nuclear family and community structures continue to break down. Children feel unsafe. Parents not only fear for their children's safety, they often feel unable to supply the necessary security and structure in which to raise their children. The son or daughter comes home from school saying that a number of kids in the class are doing martial arts and that it seems 'really cool'. The child seems enthusiastic, whereas so many other things seem to be 'boring'. The parents feel it must be better than hanging around or playing computer games, so they agree to the child taking part. They feel, perhaps, that such training will be really helpful.

But let's look more closely at what is going on in modern martial arts. Martial arts, or as it is often called now, self-defence, has largely cut itself off from its cultural and spiritual dimensions, from its source of inspiration and purpose. While lip-service may be paid to this, it is seldom more than an impoverished shadow of what existed in the past. Martial art becomes a hobby, a method to keep fit, or a sport. But at the same time it focuses on the maiming of another human being. No longer does the exponent need to go through all the hardships that would both challenge and prepare him to use this knowledge and power wisely. Martial arts have been adapted to our modern consumer consciousness, our need for instant gratification. And though we buy now, we will certainly, if unknowingly, have to pay later.

There is evidence that in the past, in some martial arts schools, students were taken in at about the age of puberty. In other schools the students would not be admitted until after their teens. What is clear is that in both cases students were not given the overt martial art forms or exercises until they had reached maturity in their late teens or early twenties. There was a very special reason for this. The masters had to wait for the moment when the 'ego' appeared – the time when the adolescent became an adult. It was only then that the young adult had the faculties and the ability to understand and control the special energy and power that he was subsequently taught to develop.

Equipping children with these powers before they have the maturity to deal with them, is perhaps the most dangerous aspect of modern martial arts.

I once broke up a street fight where a young boy of eleven was very seriously assaulting a much older and larger boy. The younger boy was extremely difficult to restrain from further violence as he was badly out of control. The older boy suffered a broken jaw and nose as well as serious knee injuries. Later when I talked to the younger boy he told me he had been studying martial arts for four years. In the last year, which had been quite intense, he had gone in for competitions and done well. I asked him what had happened in this instance. He told me the older boy had been picking on one of his friends and that his friends had asked him to 'sort the guy out'. He agreed; however, in the fight, he said he 'lost it', meaning he had lost all control. He became quite upset, saying that he was really sorry, and that when he had approached the other boy he hadn't meant to hurt him so badly. In subsequent conversations with the boy it became clear that he had become withdrawn and even a little afraid, though he had become a hero of sorts amongst his friends. I was puzzled as to why he should feel reticent. His answer was that he was afraid to get angry now in case it happened again. He told me that at the time of the fight he had meant, and had had the ability, to kill the older boy.

This is an extreme example of what can happen if children are given powers they cannot control. Also, in this case and in other less dramatic ones, children studying martial arts gain a good deal of kudos from their class-mates. They are seen as hard or bad figures to be handled with care. Even if the child is actually not very proficient at the skill, he will still develop an aggressive stance toward problems, and the others in the group will pick this up. Gaining status in a group through an undercurrent threat of violence is not a quality that anyone would wish for a child or a group of children. The other effect it may have is to goad other, bigger children into picking on the martial arts student in order to 'put him in his place'; they may even do this in a gang. The exponent often has an over-inflated impression

of his own abilities and can be seriously at risk in these situations. The parents who sign their children up for classes in the hope they will learn how to protect themselves, are contributing to a no-win situation. Children may get themselves into trouble by overestimating their ability. It takes years of intense practice to reach the stage of being able to defend oneself properly. But if this stage is reached, then a scenario like the fight I have described may develop.

But there is another aspect. Throughout this book it has been suggested that games, sports and movement play a key role in both the physical and inner growth of the child. Movement in general has a critical task in shaping social and emotional development. Let's look, therefore, at the movements involved in martial arts, and their possible ramifications:

Firstly, consider the body position. The knees are bent, the centre of gravity is dropped. This, like all the movements involved, is continually practised and repeated. Weight and gravity are strongly cultivated. But as I have tried to show throughout this book, it is very important for children to receive a balanced spatial education. Martial arts takes little account of the five other directions in space that need equal cultivation at specific times in the child's life. In martial arts, the aspects of 'levity' * (as opposed to gravity), back-space, front-space, left and right, are either contracted or misused. In more simple terms, the martial art stance is not a natural way for children to stand. It counteracts the healthy experiences they need – of running, jumping, skipping, and all the activities that are involved in levity. An experience of gravity alone, of being 'brought down' without any counterbalance, is not at all helpful for children's development at this age.

In many martial art forms, particularly in what are known as 'hard' forms, the hands and feet are used like heavy clubs ready to hit or kick, or like sharp knives prepared to chop or hack. Needless to say this is not what these finely developed parts of our bodies are designed to do, and repetitive use of the feet and hands in this way does little to cultivate sensitivity or 'gentle handling' of a situation. The voice, our most expressive tool, is used in martial arts as a guttural roar.

All these martial movements have a decided emotional as well as physical impact on the student. For example, in some martial arts it is considered highly praiseworthy to be able to punch, kick or even head-butt through an extremely hard tile held vertically by two helpers. The thicker and stronger the tile, the higher the level reached. Any normal, untrained person attempting to emulate this would be badly hurt. It is done by focusing an intense energy far beyond the obstacle – which becomes a mere trifle to be destroyed in the movement aimed beyond it. This consciousness is cultivated through repeated practice. To allow a physical barrier to interfere with your movement towards a goal, is considered a weakness. But this has significant implications in terms of human relationship for the child or adolescent who does not yet have the faculties to control such a power. Take for example a situation where he is told that homework must be done by a certain date, or that he must be home at a certain time at night. If it is his *aim* not to be in at that time, and he has had it deeply ingrained into his psyche that he should ignore, or punch through obstacles in order to reach his goal, his reaction to parental constraints will be strongly affected. This is not intellectual theory – it has been observed by many educators and parents alike.

A similar outcome is also to be found in the deflective techniques used in many soft-form martial arts. In this case the exponent will deflect and direct the force that he receives back on to and therefore against, the source. This can be devastatingly destructive, depending on the amount of energy directed. But the emotional impact of this technique is also considerable. If, for example, parents ask their son to return home at a certain time, and he disagrees, he may well simply deflect the parents' energy – in this case their instructions – and be home at what ever time he wishes. If this causes the adults concern or anger, which is directed at the child, he may deflect this also. The more intense and concerned his parents become, the more he will direct their frustration back at them.

Finally, in each kick, hit, or throw the student practises, he is imagining a vulnerable or sensitive part of his opponent's body. It may be a kick designed to dislocate the knee, or rupture an internal organ; it may be a hold or a throw designed to break an arm or dislocate a shoulder, it may be a punch aimed at the nose, designed to force the cartilage back into the brain. One should be in no doubt that inherent in each movement is the intent to cause harm. It is this picture that the child has before him when he practises for hour after hour. To suggest that these things have no adverse affect on children would be naive. If they feel vulnerable in a world they perceive as violent, then we their guardians must seek to reassure them and give them the warmth that will lead them back into the safety and innocence of childhood.

* a term used to describe an upward-streaming lightness, that can be experienced as the opposite force to gravity.

CHILDREN IN BALLET:
STRUNG UP, STRUNG OUT

Along with opera, ballet is one of our classic artistic forms. Why is this? And why is it that so many children undergo a classical ballet training?

Ballet is a highly stylised, perhaps the most stylised, of all movement forms. While an ordinary human being can kick, strike or bounce a ball, punch or wrestle, perhaps even do a roll or turn a cartwheel, there are very, very few who can move like a classical dancer. This is not surprising since it is exactly the point, the aim of ballet. The movements are designed to appear not only graceful but 'other-worldly', to lift the audience up and away from earthly existence; another, connected feature of ballet is that it is almost totally audience-centred. Of course the dancers experience feelings – particularly pain! – but they must not communicate this to the onlooker. They must appear as if the earth with all its cares and limitations does not exist. Gravity is overcome and denied. The dancer seems to draw us away into another dimension.

This denial of gravity shows itself in many ways. The most obvious is the tutu, and the costuming in general. The tutu extends out from the waist and forms a frilly band around the dancer. It draws a clear distinction between the body that shows above the waist, which is often gaudily and attractively dressed, and the lower body which is as far as possible plainly adorned in tights. The tutu emphasises the dancer's upper body, and also prevents her from seeing her own legs and feet.

The whole posture of the dancer is developed and sustained by training the muscles, particularly of the abdomen and the legs. The dancers spend painful, feet-distorting hours, learning the *en pointe* technique, in which the knuckles of the toes are forced to carry the entire body weight. This increases the illusion of weightlessness, as only a tiny surface area is in touch with the floor, reinforcing the impression of a negative attitude towards the earth – the least possible physical contact with it the better. The feet move in tiny steps that seem to float the upper body across the floor; or the dancers are thrown and leap high into the air, seeming to hover there like a bird. The gaze is directed up and away. The arm movements generally begin at the waist and move upwards, seldom dropping below the tutu. A stylistic copy of the way a child moves with ease and levity is sought and parodied.

So ballet audiences, particularly since the industrial revolution, were encouraged to leave the world behind, with all its increasing materialism and mechanisation, and be transported to higher, more graceful realms. Not to appreciate this art-form was considered to be the mark of a Philistine, someone who was cut off from the more noble aspects of cultural life.

In fact, a child's movement and inner intent, particularly at play, could not be more different from the ballet dancer. Whereas the dancer undergoes hours of training to achieve a technique-based levity, the child moves with an effervescence and buoyancy that is as beautiful as it is unconscious. The classical dancer's movements are highly stylised, the child's are totally natural. The dancer draws a sharp divide between inner experience and what can be externally observed, while the child knows no such divide; the way the child moves is strongly motivated by the way he feels. Whereas the dancer deals in abstraction, the child is immersed in reality. The dancer's moves are carefully directed, the child's are spontaneous. The dancer moves for the appreciation of an audience, the child plays because it is a natural expression of life. The dancer's aim is to rise above an earthly existence, the child's energies are completely opposite – he wants to learn about the world and become a part of it.

'The school of ballet of today, vainly striving against the natural laws of gravitation or the natural will of the individual, and working in discord in its form and movement with the form and movement of nature, produces a sterile movement which gives no birth to future movements, but dies as it is made.

The expression of the modern school of ballet, wherein each action is an end, and no movement, pose or rhythm is successive or can be made to evolve succeeding action, is an expression of degeneration, of living death. All the movements of our modern ballet school are sterile movements because they are unnatural: their purpose is to create the delusion that the law of gravitation does not exist for them.

The primary or fundamental movements of the new school of the dance must have within them the seeds from which will evolve all other movements, each in turn to give birth to others in unending sequence of still higher and greater expression, thoughts and ideas.

To those who nevertheless still enjoy the movements, for historical or choreographic or whatever other reasons, to those I answer: They see no farther than the skirts and tricots. But look – under the skirts, under the tricots are dancing deformed muscles. Look still farther – underneath the muscles are deformed bones. A deformed skeleton is dancing before you. This deformation through incorrect dress and incorrect movement is the result of the training necessary to the ballet.

The ballet condemns itself by enforcing the deformation of the beautiful woman's body! No historical, no choreographic reasons can prevail against that!

It is the mission of all art to express the highest and most beautiful ideals of man. What ideal does the ballet express?'

from *The Art of Dance*, by Isadora Duncan

To encourage children to take up ballet is to impose an *adult-ified* concept of beauty on those that have no need of it. If the child is repeatedly exposed to this form of training, he will eventually begin to adopt the adult values of the dancer; this is to invite emotional disturbance and to restrict the child's full experience of childhood.

THE TWELFTH YEAR THRESHOLD

To recap then: roughly three years have passed since the child experienced the last major threshold – when he stepped out of early into middle childhood. The experiences have been rich: the ten year old discovered his individual place in the order he grew to recognise around him. The eleven year old began to harmonise with his new-found individuality, developing a sense of beauty and grace, truth, and the budding ability to express it. The twelve year old stands at the doorway of late childhood and puberty. Dramatic changes lie ahead as he gathers the strength needed to face them. He prepares to take leave of those direct influences of the home and family that have nurtured him, and is dimly aware that he will have to become progressively more self-reliant. This is both exciting and unsettling.

He therefore begins to demand a sense of form and order – from himself and from those around him even more so. He sets off on a forced march to the boundaries of what he can achieve, and to discover what the adults around him will accept. When he reaches these boundaries, he will begin to test his strength – at first tentatively but, as the years pass, in an increasingly probing, personal way.

If he finds these boundaries weak, or lacking consistency, he may push beyond them and wander into a land he is not yet equipped to navigate. He may become fearful, resentful and lost.

Break outs and boundaries

He may then begin to look for sub-cultures to lean on – like drugs and gangs; or may turn inward and cut himself off from what he experiences as a formless world. These actions may be distress flares which he sends up in the hope that they will attract the attention of potential rescuers. If they are not noticed, though, he will wander further into these strange lands. Gradually the memory of the warmth of the past will fade. What he has seen with eyes that were too young will come to seem normal. He will defend it aggressively against anyone who seems to threaten the only way of life he knows. Very careful overtures will be needed to approach this feral soul. He will need the food of unconditional love and acceptance, and will not return without a good deal of reassurance to the place which he originally deserted because of its threatening chaos.

At this age, then, the child needs secure boundary-walls; but they also need to be adaptable, changing as the young person develops. At twelve they need to be strong and straight: easily identifiable, with only a little flexibility, and no ornamentation. The discoverer of these walls has not yet acquired the subtlety to search for the cracks that will appear in them in the coming years. The builders of these walls do not place them there in an attempt to imprison – the opposite is actually the case. They give security and reassurance at a time when this is what is being asked for. There may be 'break-outs', but the escapee knows where the boundaries stand, knows therefore that he has gone beyond them, and where to return to find them again. In the coming years he may discover on returning from one of these breakouts, that the caring walls have shifted and expanded somewhat; but at twelve there is little movement. They are straight, strong and predictable.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Around the age of 12, circus skills are of particular benefit. These include tightrope walking, flying trapeze, unicycling, acrobatics, devil-sticks, diabolos, and of course juggling. Just at a time when the 12 year-old wants to test his new found strength and consciousness, these skills can be introduced with great success. They demand all-round skill, spatial awareness and at times great courage.

205. JUGGLING

Equipment: For each juggler, 3 soft, triangular beanbags (each side is about 4 inches, or 10cm, long). These can be made in the craft lessons, or on a rainy afternoon at home.

Step 1:
Start alone by simply throwing and catching one beanbag. Any kind of throwing will do – and one can be quite creative!

Choose one juggler at a time for the others to copy: a kind of throwing and catching follow-my-leader. Then change to another leader, etc.

Step 2:
In partners: While maintaining eye contact with your partner, throw the beanbag from your hand to your partner's.

Step 3:
Throw the beanbag from hand to hand, following a lemniskate pattern (or figure of 8 – see below: both the hands and the beanbag move in this pattern).

Step 4:
Facing your partner, mirror each other's movements, throwing the beanbag as in Step 3: so one partner will start with the beanbag in his left hand, the other in his right.

Step 5:
With your partner: One partner holds his beanbag in his left hand, the other holds his in his right hand. Begin as in Step 4, but after three throws, the next (fourth) throw will be to your partner. (The beanbags therefore swap over.) Throw from your right hand so that your partner catches in his left, and vice versa.

I tell the children at this point that they should imagine that their hands are soft golden spoons, and that the beanbag is a heavy but precious object. (This helps to prevent 'snatching' catches.)

Step 6:
Kneel on the ground and work alone. Holding a beanbag in each hand, throw the one in your left hand so that it lands on the floor in front of your right knee; and then the right-hand beanbag so that it lands in front of your left knee. Pick up the beanbags and repeat. Make sure the beanbags land at the same distance in front of each knee.

Step 7:
Take a beanbag in each hand. Throw them in an arc towards each other so that they 'kiss' (meet, collide) in the air.

After doing this for a while, tell the jugglers that this is what you *don't* do when juggling.

Step 8:
Kneeling on the ground again, take a beanbag in each hand. First, the right hand throws the beanbag so that it lands in front of the left knee. Then the left hand throws the beanbag so that the right hand can easily catch it. Swap around, so the left hand throws first, the right hand second.

Step 9:
Repeat Step 8, but this time the first hand that throws, throws to the other hand, and the second hand throws its beanbag so that it lands on the ground.

Step 10:
Repeat Step 8, but catch both. Make sure that there is a definite rhythm set up by the steady 1, 2 throwing of the right and left hand.

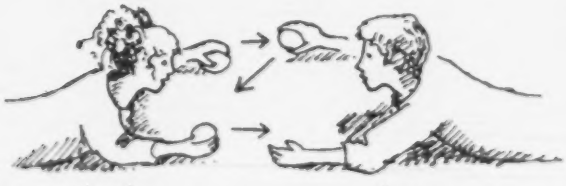
* If a juggler has difficulty in throwing from right to left or left to right (i.e. throws up vertically and catches with the same hand), suggest that, holding a beanbag in each hand, he rhythmically touches the right beanbag to the left shoulder, the left to the right shoulder.
* If a juggler throws from one hand so that the beanbag consistently lands much further from the knee than the other beanbag, stand behind the juggler and ask him to throw the beanbag with his 'faulty' hand over the opposite shoulder. Catch the beanbag and return it to him, so he can repeat this action over and over again.

Step 11:
Both partners lie on the floor, on their fronts, facing each other with their arms forward. One is the catcher, the other the juggler.

Tell the students that the catcher is 'gravity', imagine he is above the juggler, suspended above him by a rope. The juggler has one beanbag in each hand, the catcher has one in his right hand. They will throw/slide the beanbags along the floor.

The juggler throws the beanbag in his right hand to the catcher's left hand. The catcher throws his beanbag to replace the one that has left the juggler's right hand. Then the juggler throws the beanbag in his left hand to the catcher's right hand. The catcher replaces this one.

This is repeated. Then the partners swap over, so that the catcher has a turn as juggler. Tell the jugglers that now their brain is successfully juggling!



juggler catcher

Step 12:
The juggler kneels on the floor, with one beanbag in each hand. The catcher stands above him, with his palms outstretched.

The juggler throws the right beanbag to the catcher's left hand. He catches it at it's zenith. Then the same is repeated on the other side. The catcher then lets the left beanbag drop into the juggler's left hand, and the right into his right hand.

* If a juggler has a tendency to be too retentive: the catcher can put one hand, palm down, just above where the beanbags will reach their zeniths. The juggler then throws the beanbags, aiming to make them reach their zeniths at this point.

* If a juggler tends to try to 'fill up' an empty hand with a beanbag, you can do two things. First, the catcher puts his hand between the juggler's two hands, and asks the juggler to juggle.

  Or, teach the juggler 'The Dancing Lady'. The left hand throws the beanbag in an arc while the right hand throws (more of a pass, really) its beanbag to the left hand. Then the right hand throws the arc, the left hand passes. (So the same beanbag is always being thrown in an arc.)

Step 13:
Hold two beanbags (1 and 3) in the left hand, and one (2) in the right. Beanbag 3 will remain in the left hand at all times. The left hand throws beanbag 1 to the right hand, and the right hand then throws beanbag 2 to the left hand.

Then throw beanbag 2 back to the right hand, beanbag 1 to the left. Repeat. Then practise holding beanbag 3 in the right hand while doing the same.

Step 14:
Kneeling on the ground: Repeat Step 13, but when beanbag 2 is at its zenith, just drop beanbag 3.

Step 15:
Repeat Step 14, but instead of dropping beanbag 3, throw it away somewhere, anyhow ...

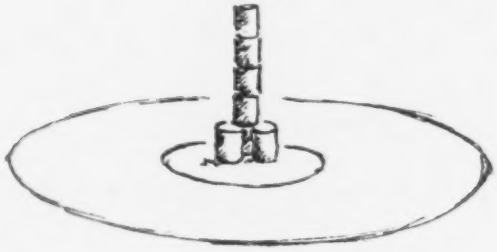
Step 16:
... *drum roll* (this is the moment we've been waiting for!) ... Repeat Step 15, but now throw beanbag 3 in an arc and catch it.

Step 17:
Mark beanbag 1 in some way. Practice a flowing rhythm of juggling with all three beanbags, particularly emphasising beanbag 1.

206. PILLAR AND PROTECTOR

Equipment: a soft practice volleyball
A set of seven tin cans that can stack on top of one another

Play area: draw a large circle 10-15 paces across, around a small circle 2-3 paces across. The size of the inner circle can be adjusted according to the skill of the protector: a smaller circle makes his job easier, and a larger circle increases the work!



Build a 'pillar' in the centre of the inner circle with the tin cans. One person is chosen to be the 'Protector'. He must guard the 'pillar' from being hit by the ball. He stands just outside the small circle, facing the direction the ball is coming from. He is not allowed into the small circle.

The rest of the players are 'Killers'. They stand outside the larger circle and throw the ball at the pillar, trying to knock it down, from any point on the outside circle.

The protector shields the pillar with his arms, legs and body – if he can get round the small circle fast enough to face the oncoming ball!

Passing amongst 'Killers' is permitted. The Killers are not allowed inside the large circle. If the pillar is hit, then a new pillar is built and a new protector chosen.

Variation

Equipment: A soft practice volleyball.
A lit candle in a candle holder, or a rose or another flower.

Instead of a pillar made of tin cans, in this variation there are two players in the circle: one player is a 'pillar of stone', and stands in the centre of the small circle holding the lit candle (or rose). This person is *not allowed to move,* except to pivot on the spot, so as to face the oncoming ball. (This is a hard task – one's reflexes to duck or dodge the ball are very strong: but that is the challenge!)

In the same way as before, the other person in the circle, the protector, tries to keep the ball away from the pillar. (I often let the 'pillar' choose his own 'protector'.)

I first played this game when I was working with behaviourally-disturbed children; it met with great success. *Pillar and Protector* is a game that deals with issues of cruelty, protection and vulnerability. I give the 'pillar' a lit candle (or a flower in a vase) in order to make him feel as vulnerable as possible. Not being allowed to protect oneself from the ball, but sometimes having to rely on the protection of another, is something we all need to come to terms with: it does not always come easily. This game can also raise the consciousness of those who bully and taunt others. It can be helpful to make the bully protect his victim, as well as putting the bully himself into the vulnerable position of the Pillar.

207. MATILDA

Equipment: one play ball

The players stand in a circle, approximately 15 paces in diameter. The leader begins by standing in the centre of the circle. He throws the ball straight up into the air, and calls out the name of one of the players, e.g. **'Ben!'**.

All the players, except Ben, run as far as possible away from the ball. Ben then tries to catch the ball on the full. As soon as he catches it, all the other players freeze. However, if he doesn't manage to catch the ball, the other players secretly decide on a new name for him, e.g. **'Harry'.** The leader then throws the ball and names a player again.

When **'Harry'** is called, Ben, who knows he has a new name, must be awake enough to go into the centre and try to catch the ball. You may end up having a large number of fictitious names for players who dropped the ball.

If Ben does catch the ball on the full, he tries to brand one of the players from wherever he caught it. If he misses, then the circle reforms, but this time, Ben throws the ball up and calls a name.

But if Ben manages to brand a player, say Bob, then Bob has to throw the ball from the centre of the circle. Or, the player branded has to sit out. In which case the game ends when there are only three players left.

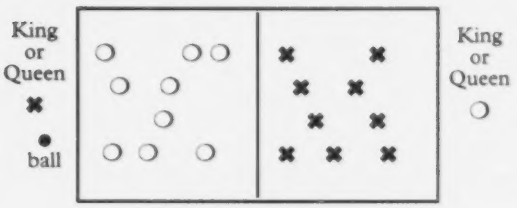
This is a very exciting extension to dodge-ball games played at the age of 10. *In Dead and Alive,* however, almost all the players are both dodgers as well as throwers.

208. DEAD AND ALIVE

Equipment: one playball

Play lines: wall lines (see glossary)

Play area: 30 x 20 paces for 30 players



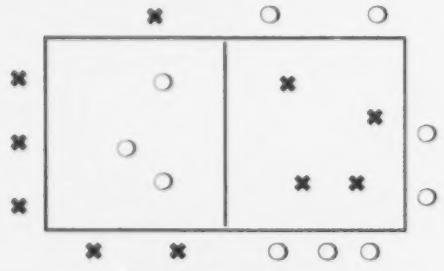
beginning position

Divide the players into two teams. Each team stands in one court, facing the ball. From each team choose a player to be the thrower (King or Queen). These stand at the end of the opposing team's court.

To begin the game, give the ball to King or Queen A, who throws the ball at the players of Team B, and tries to brand them from the waist down. The dodgers on the court have two options:

- to **dodge the ball.** But if a player is branded, then he is 'dead', and becomes a thrower for his team. He does this by going to the same end as his King or Queen and helps to brand the opposition players.
- or to **intercept the ball.** If a player intercepts the ball he must catch it on the full (without it having bounced); he has then earned one 'life'. (This means that he can either forfeit this life and invite one of his team's throwers back onto court, or when he is next branded himself, he stays on court and the life is used up.) He can then turn to face the opposite team, and pass the ball to a throwing teammate, or take a shot at one of the opposing team's dodgers.

If a player tries to intercept the ball, but fails to catch it on the full, he becomes a thrower, and joins his teammate behind the opposite team.



game in progress

The game continues until all the dodgers on one team have been branded and gone off court to become throwers.

Variation 1

When all the dodgers on one team are dead (have become throwers), the original King or Queen from the team takes the court and makes an exciting finale, trying to survive attack from the opposition by accumulating lives, and by trying to brand the opponents. The King or Queen is given three lives to start with.

Variation 2

209. BOTTLES

Instead of having to protect oneself from being branded, the dodgers have to protect a skittle – each player has one skittle to protect. However the skittles can be also knocked down by mistake by one of the dodgers. Whoever does this is out.

This is a dynamic, fast-moving game – one of the best and most popular I have come across for the 12-13 year old.

210. DOWN BASKETBALL

Equipment: one soft play ball
2 basketball goals
3-4 coloured vests

Play area: a basketball court

Three or four players are ***It.*** They try to brand all the players with the ball. *All branding must be below the waist.* Any ***It*** can pass it to another It, but is not allowed to run with the ball.

If a player is branded, he sits down *with crossed legs,* wherever the ball hit him. (He is now a 'down' player.) However, a player (an 'up' player) can catch the ball on the full (without it having bounced), or deliberately pick up the ball off the ground – without fumbling it so that it falls to the ground – and try to shoot a basket. If he is successful, all the branded players are freed and can stand up again.

When a player is holding the ball, he can be tipped by any ***It***. He then loses the chance to free everyone, and has to sit down.

Any down player may pick up the ball if it comes close enough to him. However, a down player cannot shoot a basket, but must pass the ball to an up player. Down players may protect up players by shielding them from being hit by an ***It.***

Variation

As in *Hounds, Hares and Hunters,* a variation may be played where a down player, who has his legs crossed, can tip a running 'up' player. Then the up player must swap places with the down player who tipped him.

Another way for a down player to get up is if he can get the ball and throw it at one of the ***Its,*** and hit them without them catching the ball. The ***It*** does not go down, though, but continues to play.

Down Basketball is a terrific way to introduce basketball. It can also be used as a training aid; and has always proved to be popular. The players must be able to keep calm and carefully judge the risks they take. Any player who panics or does not keep alert in this game, will not succeed.

211. COMETS

Equipment: 5 beanbags

Level 1:
The players stand in a circle.(The circle can be described as the universe, and the beanbags are comets which fly through space.). They stand and throw the beanbags to one another at random, trying not to let them fall to the ground. The number of successful catches can be counted. When a beanbag is dropped, the counting begins again at 1.

Level 2:
The players turn to their left (or right) and start slowly walking around in a circle, continuing to throw and catch the beanbags, and counting. Every time someone drops a beanbag, the direction of the circle changes and the counting begins again.

Level 3:
To make this game even more challenging, ask the players to jog very slowly (more of a light run than a jog, really) round the circle.

Variation
Make two circles of players one inside the other. The inside circle should have fewer players than the outside circle. The circles run in opposite directions, passing the comets between them.

This is a game that relies on all the members of the group: to reach a good number of successful throws, the players have to both throw and catch consciously. They also have to make contact with one another – they cannot just throw and presume their job is done. Each person has to be involved in the catch of the player he threw to. Another challenge of this game is to learn to throw the bag or ball into the space *in front* of the oncoming catcher, recognising the space the catcher *will* occupy rather than the space he *did* occupy at the time the ball was thrown.

This game is also good for teenagers because players at this age are very unforgiving of others. You may well find, as I did, that one child struggles to catch the beanbags thrown at him, and is jeered at and frowned upon every time he 'lets us down'. But to play *Comets* successfully, the failure of individuals has to be forgiven. The bean bag or ball must also be thrown very sensitively to the player who cannot catch as well as the others. This helps encourage sensitivity for the needs of the other, rather than simply becoming frustrated at his weakness.

As developed by Jaimen McMillan

212. COUPE

One player is ***It***. He chases the other players and tries to tip them. The game begins by ***It*** naming the first person that he is going to chase, e.g. **'Kate'.**

However, if ***It*** is chasing one player (say, Kate), another player (say, John) can run between ***It*** and Kate, shouting **'Coupe!'** at the very moment he intersects the ***It's*** path, and raising his hand to identify himself. ***It*** then has to chase John. John in turn may be rescued by another player (say Jack) who cuts in between ***It*** and him. ***It*** must now pursue Jack, who runs away hoping for rescue. This is repeated until ***It*** has caught one of the players.

When a player is tipped, he becomes ***It,*** and calls out the name of the first person he is going to chase. Those players running between ***It*** and the runner must run across their path clearly (see diagram).
Hint: it helps if the leader names the player who has shouted **'Coupe!'** e.g. he can call out: **'Sarah is coupe...Melanie is coupe'** etc. as the coupe changes.

This is a game that has both form and chaos. Initially the player who is It can only tip the player who is named; but anyone can call the chaser onto himself by shouting **'Coupe!'** To intersect the line of intention between It and the child being chased, requires timing, courage and quick thinking. These are similar to the skills needed for *Running the Gauntlet* (game 186).

coupe

213. BUZZ

Play area: 25 x 15 paces

This is a simplification of a traditional Indian game. Divide the players into two teams. Each team is numbered 1 to 10 (or up to as many players as you have on each team). One team will run first (Team A) while the other team will catch and avoid being caught (Team B).

- Team A waits, ready to start, on one side.
- The first player (player A) moves towards the centre line, and as he does so, takes a deep breath.
- As he steps over the centre line, he starts saying **'buzzzzz'** in a loud voice without pausing.
- He may not take another breath until he is back on his own side.
- He may stay in the opponents' half for as little or as long a time as he likes providing his **'buzzzzz'** does not run out.
- While in the opponents' half, he can tip the members of Team B, who will be running away and avoiding him as he enters their field. When they are tipped, they do not immediately sit out – but they must do so if the player who tipped them manages to make it back over the half-way line into his own safe territory.
- When Player A has run out of breath, and cannot say **'buzzzzz'** anymore, he can no longer tip any of the B players.
- However, when he runs out of breath, Team B can try to catch and hold him without fear of being tipped. If this is done then he is out. The two teams alternate in sending a **'buzzzzz'** player in.
- They may do so as soon as the opposing number returns. (If player number 2 from team A has just returned over the line, then player number 2 from team B can immediately cross the line and begin to **'buzzzzz'**.)

There are two ways that Player A can be caught:

- Taken unawares by player from team B, Player A is held in a bear hug round the waist, until his **'buzzzzz'** (breath) runs out.
- When his **'buzzzzz'** runs out while he is running, Team B can catch Player A in any way they can, and hold him on their side of the centre line.
- Once he is caught, Player A tries to drag his restrainers over the centre line, to Team A's side. If he is successful, the person (or persons) who were holding him are out.
- When a player is caught he may call **'Stop!'** which means he has submitted and agrees that he must now go out. The holding players must release him straight away.
- The first phase ends when there are no players remaining on one of the teams. Alternatively, the leader can give each team 2 minutes of running, and then two minutes of catching; when this is up, each team counts the number of captures they have made. The team with the most captures wins.

Hints for players:
To increase the chances of catching a raider, the running team can run away from the centre line when being chased by the raider, so that when his breath runs out, he has less chance of escaping to safety across the centre line.

Variations

- Build up the number of raiders crossing the line at any one time, until you have two or three saying **'buzzzzz'** together.
- If a player is tipped by the raider, instead of sitting out, he can join the raiding team.

This is one of the few games that I have never liked much, but that the children love! This may be because it involves a marked sense of combat, and players have to be courageous. In order to play successfully, players must not panic – they must 'keep their heads'. This game also introduces a structured and fun-filled environment for physical contact between players – which is healthy for children at this age.

Devised by Craig Taylor

214. ALL AGAINST ALL

Equipment: two soft practice volleyballs

Play area: 25 x 20 paces for 25 players.
It is helpful if this playing area has either a fence or walls around it, otherwise the balls will be difficult to retrieve.

There are no teams in this game. Two balls are used at the same time. The aim is to throw the ball at any other player on the field, trying to hit him below the waist.

If you get hit you are out. You immediately go to the side of the playing area, remembering which player threw the ball that hit you. *You may re-enter the game if the player who got you out is later hit himself and leaves the field.* This player may have got only you out or he may have got many people out. You are all free to enter the game if he is is hit and leaves the field. If you are unsure who hit you then you go to the side and pick any player on the field. When that player is out you may re-enter the game.

No one may run with the ball. You may run freely if you do not have a ball. If you have one of the balls in your hands when you are hit, you may not throw it. You must place it on the floor and leave the field.

If you catch a ball on the full (without it having bounced) then the person who threw it is out. If you try to catch it and you drop it, you are out. You may not protect your legs with your hands and arms. If they are struck while in front of your legs, you are still out.

The game ends when either all the players are out except one (this rarely happens), or when a set number of player remain (for a group of 25 you may say 5 players), or when a set period of time has elapsed.

215. TEAM AGAINST TEAM

The equipment is the same as in *All Against All*, with the addition of three or four sets of coloured vests or sashes.

The rules are also the same, except that there are now three teams on the field at once (you may introduce a fourth later on).

The aim of the game is to get as many of the other team out as you can. All other rules relating to being hit, going out and coming back in are the same as in *All Against All*.

The game is over when either only one team represented by any number of its players remains on the court (this seldom happens) or when a set period of time elapses (3-4 minutes); a count is then taken, and the team with the most players on court wins.

216. MEDUSA'S RAFT

Equipment: 2-3 gym floor-mats pushed together, or a chalk rectangle marked on the floor, measuring a total of about 6 x 10 feet (1.8 x 3 metres) for 15-20 players.

All the players stand on the mat. This is the raft around which swim hungry sharks. The raft is sinking so the players try to push each other off. If you are pushed off you are out. The last few players on the raft win.

This is a very simple game, which I play with children from the age of fourteen. It helps them experience using their balance and, in particular, their weight – learning to 'earth' themselves.

As related by Jeremy Dunleavy

Chapter 11
Age 13 and beyond

Symbolism and History, of Sport

'Like all great athletes, he was the lord of time and space. In other words, he played in an environment of his own choosing at a rhythm dictated by his own mood and inclination. He was beautiful to watch no matter what he was doing on the field of play. He was blessed with a natural, unhurried ease of movement that, along with the absence of frill or flourish, is the hallmark of a true stylist. He was everything an athlete should be; graceful and gracious, outrageously talented and naturally modest. Perhaps his most attractive and endearing attribute was that he didn't understand what all the fuss was about. Still doesn't.'

This article describing the cricketer Sir Garfield Sobers, written by Michael Parkinson in a national British newspaper, *The Daily Telegraph*, could also apply to a very select number of athletes who have taken little interest in the hype and vastly inflated financial incentives that surround and pollute much of modern sport, preferring to draw their inspiration from the fundamental spatial dynamics of the game itself. In doing so they not only become outstanding players, but also unwitting beacons of moral light in a world in need of it. Surely this is what we wish for our young athletes of today.

Much of this book has been concerned with younger children. Let us now turn to the subject of sport for teenagers. A case has been made for not beginning sport too early in the child's life (see Chapter 10) and some mention has also been made of the positive influences that sport can have on teenagers. This is a fascinating and huge area of study and may form the basis of another book at a later date. Nevertheless, a brief overview of an ideal programme is worth exploring here.

THE ORIGINS

In order to do this we must take a glance back at the origins of sport. It is commonly agreed that the ancient Greeks were among the first and most successful in developing what we now call sport; they elevated bodily movement from the mundane and the combative. The Greek striving to build an earthly connection between the gods and mankind reflected the overall evolution of human consciousness. With the coming of the Greek era, the gods gradually became less intimately and directly influential upon life and culture than had previously been the case. This was a momentous change – and one whose effects continue even to the present day. The new emphasis was brought about by an increasing sense of independence and individuality, of ego. What better way to foster and enhance this than by competing, by matching yourself against your fellows? Not just in order to see who was the fastest or the strongest; but to use the body as a vessel, an instrument for striving toward a reconnection with the divine. This is why so much of a child's education in Ancient Greece was given over to athletic prowess. There were few divides between sporting, cultural and spiritual life. Evidence of this is best seen in the Olympiad and the original Stadium. The word Stadium is defined as 'a stage in a process'. The Sanctuary of Olympia, which includes the Palaistra and the Gymnasion (practice areas) as well as the Stadium, was built around the temple of Zeus. The athletes and spectators involved in the Games preserved a deep connection with both funerary customs and religious practice and festivals.

In the transition from the Classic to the Hellenic and then to the Roman era we see a further grounding of this need to be more fully on the earth, to develop individuality. The religious nature of the Games began to fade. A very telling step was taken, when, in the 5th century B.C., professionalism began: athletes were given large sums of money, special rights, and lavish gifts by their cities. After the Roman conquest of Greece, Sulla transferred the games to Rome where the so-called 'heavy events' of wrestling and boxing became more and more popular, and fighting to the death between gladiators or man and beast was introduced. Whereas previously, in Greek times, these events had been seen as a dedication to the gods in which both onlooker and athlete were involved, they now became bloody arena spectacles. And seldom before in history had anything so precise and incisive been experienced as the armies which now amassed rank on rank in perfect formation. Physical prowess was still, at this point, vaguely connected with the divine; but the signs of a separation became apparent, which continued and grew ever more marked through the succeeding ages.

By the time of the European Middle Ages this divergence had become clearly defined. The spiritual world could now only be approached through the intermediary of the priesthood. A guarded doorway was put firmly in place between

the individual and his God. The body was viewed as a tainted, fallen image of God, to be reviled and overcome. Knights became, at this time, an elevated caste – often pictured on horseback – whose gaze was turned up and away from earthly reality.

It took the mechanism and materialism of the industrial revolution to accelerate and form modern sport. The structures that had for so long been held in place by community and extended family, began for the first time to fall apart. The priesthood, the church, and mankind's relationship to God were brought into question. Into this void stepped sport. Sport not only attempted to free people from the grinding hardships of the factory and reconnect them with each other, it also sought a new view of human beings and their physical and spiritual place within the world.

Since then there has been an increasing dislocation of the family and community; a rapid increase in industrialisation, which has led to an isolating technological environment; a decline of the church's central role; and an increasing awareness that people must now walk alone and forge their own path in relationship to spirituality. The corresponding massive growth of sport can therefore hardly come as a surprise. Hundreds of millions of people are involved in sport. Very few children in school in any country in the world are not exposed to its formative influence. It is therefore high time that the seed which the Greeks planted long ago begins to be nurtured, if it is to bear fruit and aid our evolution. This is why it is of such significance that we begin to educate our children in a way that recognises the differing dimensions that sport and movement offer. We must develop comprehensive movement programmes that give our young people opportunities to play games and sports which mirror their developmental stage; which allow them to unfold at their own speed, in activities that nurture the whole individual not just the physical body. If we remain chained to our bodies alone – indulging in beauty contests, aerobics and body building, treating the body with allopathic medicine that denies the soul's and spirit's role in healing, taking performance-enhancing drugs; if we continue to be dominated by a rampantly demanding fashion industry and a two-dimensional media culture, and, most wide-spread of all, a hard, competitive, aggressive, body-centred form of sport – then we will have missed a unique historical and evolutionary opportunity.

Sport can be a vehicle for dynamic human growth; or it can lead us into a wasteland sub-culture of vain self-seeking, of aggression and soullessness.

The symbols of the modern mystery

Let's look at some of the parallels that exist between religious and devotional life, sociological and emotional needs, and modern sport. Symbolism exists all around us. It attempts to build a representational bridge between the visible and the invisible, between physical and spiritual worlds. It is celebrated in art, poetry, music, prose, dance – indeed wherever the human being strives toward higher ideals. Pushing beyond the normal expectations and limits of life is also a hallmark of sport. So sport too must have its symbolism.

The goal

The goal is perhaps the clearest to define. We all have our ideal picture of what we want to achieve in our life. We call this our 'goal'. It may be as mundane as replacing your car with a new one every two years and keeping up with the mortgage repayments so as to provide a secure home for your family. You may set yourself a target to do with your work; or place great value on your social and personal relationships. You may feel drawn to prayer and meditation. Whatever goal you have, it will always contain a striving to move forwards, to improve your life, whether on a physical, social or spiritual level. A true goal is not something you only occasionally recall and wistfully regard; it is a quality you integrate with every-day life through diligence and daily practice, and by overcoming obstacles.

A goal in sport contains a very strong reflection of this striving quality. Difficulties have to be overcome to score a goal. Skill is built up through regular practice. Tactics are discussed in order to optimise a team's chances. The way each individual relates to the others is of vital importance. All these aspects are then put into place on the day of the game to make goal-scoring possible. Outdoor pursuits such as canoeing and rock climbing also have these features, only in this instance the tactical side of things is a much more individualised process, and the goal is not so clearly or visibly defined and restricted. Some sports-men and women are paid huge sums of money because of their prowess at goal-scoring; and there is jubilation when one is scored. We, the viewing public, unconsciously recognise the symbolism and the parallels this has in our own life. Fully realizing our abilities can come only after hardship and regular practice. The achievement arising from this practice is a clear proof that the athlete or sports-person has raised herself to a higher plane.

For a modern civilisation that has left behind many of the old rites of passage – considering them no longer appropriate to the way in which we now live – goals remain a powerful representation and metamorphosis of such nodal, threshold moments. Goals are all about challenges: thresholds we strive to pass through. This is why it is so important that the right sports be given emphasis at the right age. Initiation ceremonies, once common to all cultures and faiths, all recognised that certain values and spiritual realities needed to be made available to children and young people at very precise moments in their lives. It was not a random, hit-or-miss activity. Yet nowadays we see very young children engaged in the same sport as their fathers. If we should suggest to a mother that she should go through the same initiation ceremony as her daughter – let's say confirmation which happens around twelve in the Christian faiths – she might well be somewhat upset at being placed on the same developmental level as her offspring. Or, perhaps more to the point, it would be clearly inappropriate to ask a twelve year old to take part in an adult-only ceremony. Though she might be very willing to be seen as one of the adults and feel flattered, she would be unlikely to have developed the capacity to understand what was happening. Worse still, she might be exposed to something she was not yet ready for, and be negatively affected by it. We do not present a Cubist painting or a stream of consciousness poem to an eleven year old and repeatedly, insistently expect her to understand. We might feel it was more appropriate for a sixteen year old. Sport, too, has its developmental stages and benefits, which it is up to us to discover.

The ball

It is so often said that modern culture is speeding up. Life today calls for quick responses. The media – television in particular – flash a whole succession of images at irregular intervals to keep our attention. In most primary schools we change teachers every year; in secondary schools we change teachers every lesson; food from any country can be bought regardless of the season; travel abroad, which gives many an experience of short-term climatic and cultural change, has becomes common-place. It is getting much harder to find continuity, to develop a theme, thought or enduring relationship over a long period.

Sport, particular practice with the ball, allows us the situation, space and time to shut out these fast, flickering images and focus on one activity to the exclusion of all else. It allows us to focus our thinking and bring our will into a more repetitive, even meditative quality. Whilst this has many beneficial aspects there is also an inherent danger: this kind of activity can, depending on the individual, become compulsive; it can be used to shut out the real world and develop a fantasy world based around practice and sport.

Boundaries, rules and referees

We only have to look back into the recent past, perhaps the pre-1950s, to see a society that exhibited a great deal more respect for authority than we do today. The boundaries between what was acceptable and unacceptable were much more sharply defined and adhered to. It is no coincidence that as these boundaries have broken down, there has been a corresponding increase in the numbers of people taking part in sport. While there may, in many ways, be chaos all around us, in sport we find commonly agreed conformity, and rigidly enforced consequences for overstepping the boundaries of what is acceptable. This provides a secure basis from which we can more readily explore our relationships to others and our individuality. So much now rests on the individual's shoulders; people nowadays must make decisions and decide on their own criteria without the guidance of an accepted code. It is therefore of great importance that sport depends upon clear-cut rules. But this is, again, a double-edged sword: the individual runs the risk of losing her individuality within the structure of a club and a game, becoming weakened and reliant on external forces. A chosen sport should hopefully be a means of developing individual potential, rather than an activity which only enforces group-consciousness.

In general we can see that sport provides a valuable structure within which we may define ourselves and make space to discover and strengthen our individuality. It is clear that modern sport has filled some of the vacuum left by the decline in orthodox religious practices and commonly respected community values. But a great deal of sports activity is conducted in a very unconscious way – by both the players and the coaches. This must change if we are to realize our potential for freedom. Only increased self-awareness can aid us in setting goals – both for ourselves and for human development in general. We must face the fact that the unconscious structures which previously sustained society have fallen away; and that we are in the process of creating new ones. If the nature of this change becomes arbitrary or random – and let's not forget the huge social influence sport has – we will have missed an enormous opportunity to take a giant step forward.

The 'In-coming'

In chapter One I said that child development in the first fourteen years may be seen as an 'in-coming' or 'in-carnating' movement. The child journeys from the periphery to the point. We have many sayings that unconsciously express this, such as: 'She has come into her own.' We only need to compare the light skipping of the seven year-old to the heavier yet more conscious movements of the fourteen year-old, and the gradual transition between the two, to recognise this basic 'in-coming' principle.
But 'what is it that is incarnating?' On a physical level it is clear to everyone that children grow bigger and heavier. But as soon as we move away from the visibly physical aspects of development and into the invisible, subtle levels, there is much more room for debate and disagreement.

Most would now recognise and have few problems with the concept that life has a psychological dimension. Sport does not, of course, exist in isolation from life, and there are now many practising sports psychologists. But these professionals are mainly concerned with performance enhancement, rather than any wider issues. Yes, there are commendable campaigns to encourage general participation – such as 'Sport For Fun', 'Sport For All', 'Life Be In It' etc. In fact, much money is spent by government agencies on these media drives. But this really only proves that the main focus of sport is on winning and improving performance; why, otherwise, does so much effort need to be put into promoting 'Sport for All'? The simple answer is that it has not developed along participatory, inclusive lines. Governments recognise this and spend vast sums to try to redress the balance. This is admirable – even if the motivation is somewhat limited to physical health and a vague notion of feeling better.

But let's return to the challenging idea of 'the invisible' dimension of life, sport and movement in general. Psychology used to be recognised as the study of the soul – and still is today in many circles. Philosophy examines aspects of life which are in many ways connected with the spirit. Psychology and philosophy have partly sought to 'materialise' and bring into practical, quantifiable existence what is invisible.

So we have sports psychologists. But the term 'counsellor for the spiritual aspect of sports' would at the very least raise eyebrows in the Rugby changing-rooms. It is clear, of course, that sport does not exist in a vacuum, that it is interwoven with our culture. Religion and spiritual life still play a large, if somewhat diminished part in most societies. Why then should the notion that sport has connections with spiritual dimensions of existence, cause concern, scepticism or laughter? Is our spirit something we hang on the peg along with our ordinary clothes when we change into our sports kit? When designing a sports programme for teenagers we must look at the whole developing individual, not just at the physical and vague, narrowly-defined emotional benefits such as standing up for oneself, and toughening oneself up. Even the rationale of developing self-esteem, though a positive goal in itself, is really only the first step in the path of development which a wholistic movement-programme can achieve. Self-esteem can be roughly defined as how one stands in relationship to the world and how one consciously feels about this perceived position. But it is crucially important to see that the way a young person views herself changes year by year through the turbulent time of adolescence. If the self-esteem and the overall spatial development of the teenager is to be strengthened, any educational sporting programme must give sharp definition to the appropriateness and helpfulness of particular activities at each particular age.

THE PHASES

Throughout this book the nodal points and the step-by-step developmental stages of childhood have been identified. Of course each child will grow up at her own pace in her own unique way. What has been explored here are archetypal phases and the kind of activities and dynamics that give a spatial expression to inner experience at any particular age. It may be that a stage identified here may come later or earlier than described, or be lightly passed over so that it may seem it was hardly gone through at all. What follows is not a prescription but a guide.

Thirteen

In the first teenage years young people begin to turn inward. They long for independence and solitude. Yet at times they can show amazing energy for things that capture their imagination and arouse interest. A fine interplay begins between external and internal worlds. It is also a time when a more conscious interest in the outer world takes the form of wanting to sample all sorts of aspects of life. The family norms and guidelines begin to give way to those dictated by the young person's friends, the peer group. It is a time of discovery.

The thirteen year-old still maintains some of her child-like qualities. Her body has not yet become as heavy as it will in later years. She will still be able to play and move with some lightness and innocence. However she is 'falling into weight' and as the year goes on she will experience this more and more.

So there are three main principles at work at this age. Firstly the interplay between inner and outer worlds. Secondly, connected to the need to experience the external world, is the theme of exploration. Thirdly, the impending fall into weight together with the remnant of light, agile, child-like 'springiness'. We should try to respond to all three in any games and movement programme.

The need to 'taste' many different things can easily be facilitated by allowing the teenager to experience a smorgasboard of activities: **basketball, softball, cricket, tennis,** many different athletic events – particularly **running** and **jumping** – **netball, korfball, volleyball, swimming** – with an emphasis on diving. In a school setting, each of these sports may be experienced, preferably for no more than 6 to 8 weeks, before the next activity is introduced.

In gymnastics,* much can be expanded from the previous year's work, which had as its theme the supporting of one's own body weight, expressed in handstands and various support positions on the bars. **Vaulting** can recap on the basic moves such as astride (leap frog) and squat or through-vaults; however the spring-board is placed further and further back from the box so that the students have to really leap to clear it. The big moment comes when the students are asked to test what they have learned in their handstands, and perform a long-arm. This is a vault in which they launch off the spring-board, achieve a handstand on top of the box and then flip over on to their feet, landing on the other side of the box. In parallel and asymmetric bar-work, simple dismounting moves from swinging-support are built on; however, for the more capable student, activities like swing-to-handstand on the parallel, and beat-to-handstand on the low bar of the asymmetric can be attempted. A tension drop is a very good example of falling into weight. The student stands on the low bar of the asymmetric bars, with her sacrum touching the high bar. She grips the high bar with both hands. The leader, of course, stands below. Keeping her body straight, she leans back away from the low bar, raises her feet and comes into a full inversion position. She now pikes (bends at the waist) and drives her feet towards the ground. She then quickly releases the bar from her hand-grip and lands on the safety mats below. A more advanced method is to repeat what has been described, but this time the hands are raised into a backward arc beyond the vertical position, arms straight. This arcing thrust with the arms creates the momentum to fall backwards and dismount from the high bar. High twisting, tuck, and straddle-jumps for the **trampoline**. **Tumbling** and **acrobatics** centres around hand-springs, flick-flacks and fast gymnastic display routines of basic moves involving a team of acrobats performing in tightly synchronised choreography. This can all be put together with the further development of circus skills such as unicycling, flying and static trapeze, juggling, diabolos, devil sticks, and tight- and slack-rope walking, that can be introduced in the twelfth year. Here, once more, we see a balance being struck between child-like play and formalised activity. Circus skills are an excellent way to achieve this. They are both individually challenging, spatially demanding and playful.

Orienteering should be given particular emphasis. Basic courses can be set out with markers placed in a range of about two miles from the base, with their positions marked on a map. The students divide into groups of three and are given their own maps, upon which they must carefully draw the markers in the right position. Once they have found a marker on the course, they record the colour or a distinguishing feature of it, to prove they have found

* Some of the terms used in descriptions of the gymnastics exercises in this chapter may be unfamiliar to many. I have not explained each one, since only a trained instructor should attempt them.

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it. They should try to complete the course in a given time, 45 or 50 minutes is usually enough. For every marker they find they are given ten points. You may give more points for finding the markers that are further away and a bonus of 50 points for finding all the markers. For every minute they are back after the designated time they have 10 points deducted from their score, but for every minute they are back earlier than the designated time they receive an extra 10 points. In this way, speed, accuracy and initiative are encouraged and rewarded. Orienteering is a wonderful way to give expression to the qualities of exploration, independence, and the play between the inner (the map reading) and the outer (the hunt).

The leader of these activities should remember that it is not yet necessary to make too great a leap by over-formalising or hardening the movements. In the school setting the student should experience at least one, and possibly two gymnastic lessons and two games/sports lessons (a double lesson is best) of 45 minutes each per week. These should have an introductory and enjoyable quality. For example, in a basketball lesson the teacher could devote the first third or more to playing *Space Ball* (game 130) or any of its variations. In volleyball, *Prisoner* (game 150) and its variations can be played. Basic rules are introduced, leaving aside the more complex for later on. The thirteen year-old will benefit if these rules, although only a framework, are strictly enforced. They provide the boundary, the safety, within which the young person can feel secure.

The thirteenth year is a *spring-board* into puberty and all that lies beyond.

Fourteen

Inwardness may now reach its most intense contraction, from which point the journey back out into the periphery, into the world, begins; but now the young person sees what is around her with a new, more critical and conscious faculty. She will feel much more ready to face the world and challenge what she feels is unjust. She will feel more earthed. Discussion, debate, and laughter will bubble up in the expressing of new-found ideals. The ability to make judgments, especially about rules and aesthetics begins to emerge.

So in a movement programme the main aim will be to give expression to this strong dynamic between gravity and contraction; and between awareness of the periphery and movement towards it.

In sport a continuation of the areas covered in the previous year goes on, but with an exploration of weight and how to use it. Sports such as **Rugby** and **Hockey, American** and **Australian football** can be introduced. These games emphasise weight and its use, punctuated with delicate and accurate speed and levity. Perfect for the fourteen year-old. It is important that the rules are modified so all players can take part without fear. For example, in the football games a flag or touch rule can be used: instead of tackling an opponent the player may be stopped by a double-handed tag or by removing a piece of material about 12-18 inches (30-45cm) long that has been tucked into her waist-band leaving 8-10 inches (20-25cm) showing. The player may prevent her flag being taken, by weaving and dodging, but may not hold onto it in any way. A situation may be reached in which some players nominate themselves as 'full tacklers'; these may now tackle and be tackled. Others may wish to stay as 'touch'. These players may not be tackled but can stop anyone on the pitch with a touch, and in turn be stopped with a touch. This is of particular benefit in playing with mixed physique and sex groups.

Shot putting is very much enjoyed at this age. The athlete takes hold of weight and hurls it forward, pressing dynamically into the earth in order to throw.

Wrestling can be used, with modified rules and many variations. For example, Indian wrestling. In this form the two wrestlers stand on a line, (a court line-marking on a gymnasium floor is ideal, a crack in a floorboard, or a chalk line on the floor will do); they place both feet on the line. It is important that their toes point along the line so that they do not gain an advantage by turning their back foot sideways. The two wrestlers put their front feet forward so that their toes touch each other – this prevents their feet slipping. They then join one hand each with their opponent. Now they must try to pull or push their opponent off the line, using just the one hand. The first wrestler to move a foot off the line loses.

Penguin wrestling: Two people stand about one foot (30cm) away from each other. They should be facing each other. They place their own feet tightly together. Their hands are raised to chest level, palms facing each other, but not touching. Now they must attempt to slap their opponent's hands so that she is forced backwards and has to move one foot in order to avoid falling over (this movement looks very much like a penguin, hence the name). But if an opponent tries to make a hit on the other's hands and the other quickly withdraws them, the aggressor may lose because she topples forward (this often ends up in a laughter-filled hug). The match is lost when, as a result of either hitting or missing, one of the wrestlers moves her foot – even a tiny bit.

Greek wrestling: This type of wrestling can be experienced in a quite new way at this age. For a full description see the wrestling section in Chapter 6.

Roman wrestling: This is much more the type of wrestling used in modern times. Opponents must be matched according to weight. Great stress needs to be placed on safety when playing this with young people. This wrestling should only be done on gymnastic mats (although a lot of fun can be had doing it in knee-deep water). A circle is drawn on the mats about 4-5 paces across. The two opponents face each other, placing their hands on each other's shoulders. At a given command they try either to lift their opponent up so that both her feet leave the ground (some clever wrestlers may wait until their opponent is down on the ground and then lift her feet up, thus almost avoiding the need to lift any weight. This would still count as a win) or wrestle her to the ground and pin her shoulders to the mat. This pinning rule can be adapted so that the leader may choose a one, three or even five second count before declaring a winner. The bout can also be won by pushing the opponent so that a part of her body goes outside the circle on three occasions in one game. *No throws, holding of clothes, locks that either hurt or go against the normal directional movement of the limb, are allowed. If there is any risk of injury the referee must immediately step in and stop the bout. Any wrestler deliberately attempting to hurt another is immediately declared the loser.*

Group wrestling: A good example of this is *Medusa's Raft,* described in Chapter 10.

In **gymnastics,** the exploration of the principle of weight, contraction and expansion is also undertaken. One of the principle exercises to master is the somersault in all its many forms. It is a perfect expression of the principle of gathering one's forces (the run and/or the preparation to jump), coming into oneself (the tuck position), and emerging into the periphery (the opening stance at the end of the exercise). This can take up the work done in previous years in **tumbling,** especially the forward and back-roll. This can then move on to the dive-roll onto safety mats, both from standing and running take-off. The dive-roll then progresses to dive-rolling over objects. The next step is the somersault itself. This somersaulting action can be taught using a variety of apparatus including a trampoline, a double mini trampoline, a mini trampoline, a spring-board; but best of all it should be taught using no apparatus, just the floor to push off and perhaps a mat to land on and some helpers standing either side who may assist in the standing in.* In acrobatics the many variations on human balancing exercises are a great test of strength and allow the young person to experience gravity.

In outdoor activities, **caving** and **pot-holing** form the ideal focus at a time of weight, earth and gravity, and also call on courage and perseverance. The basics of rock climbing and abseiling can be introduced, but these will be picked up much more strongly the following year.

In general, young people at this age feel a need to measure themselves against challenges. As a teacher, leader, or parent you may well experience your own values being challenged and questioned by the adolescent. The type of clothes you wear, the newspaper you read, the values you hold, and in sport, the way you play – and more importantly the way in which you interpret and enforce the rules – will be put to the test. The adult response is of particular importance. For the teenager it is a vulnerable time of rapid change; she will seek security in challenging the status quo and observing and experiencing the adult response. Whereas in the past the adult may have relied on a creative authority, this now gives way to an increasing degree of negotiation. No longer will the teenager accept rules at face value – and she is right not to. She has the awakening capacity to look 'behind the scene' and question why a certain adult stance has been adopted. She may do this with varying degrees of tact and social sensitivity, and sometimes cause flare-ups. She may need guidance to challenge in an appropriate way; but of greater importance is the response of the adult. It may be, as is very often the case, that the teenager spots an area in the adult that is somewhat unresolved and therefore sensitive. She has never really noticed it before or if she has, has not had the courage to stand up and challenge it. An adult on the receiving end of this may initially react by protecting herself, telling the teenager that it is none of her business, and not to be so rude. This usually has two results. Firstly the teenager will know she has hit the mark and secondly that the adult may be unwilling to face up to weakness. When this happens it is an unsettling experience for the adolescent; she wants to see a world that is willing to work on weaknesses, not hide from them. She wants a role model who can show her how she can face her own self-doubts and go forward into the future. If the adult response is to encourage her to speak about what she sees as unjust or unresolved and engage her in what causes her concern, the aggression often falls away and can be replaced with genuine compassion. If the criticism is aimed at the adult directly it may be possible to admit that this is an area that is sensitive, even giving a background to why this came about, and how you are working on it. Teenagers know the adult world is not perfect. It is fairly unrewarding to pretend it is. But it empowers the teenager to see adults around her who are willing to admit both their weaknesses and strengths.

At this age one may also begin to negotiate boundaries in such things as bed and home times, and acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in group or family activity. It may be, for example, that the group leader, teacher or parent offers a framework of possible choices. The teenagers are then asked to prioritise what they would like to take part in. The discussion then moves on to how this can be achieved. What are the ground rules? The next crucial and often overlooked step is also to agree the consequences for these ground rules being broken. If this last step is not taken, it can easily happen that everything goes well until a rule is broken or deadline not met, and then the adult is placed back in the role of authoritarian sanction-giver. The group has relinquished a vital part of its ownership of the whole process. And the adult gets cast in the 'bad guy' role. All this is not to suggest that the adult should abdicate authority; rather, that this authority gradually transforms itself into guidance. In this way the young person feels that the changes she is experiencing are being recognised. It is what Julian Sleigh** refers to in terms of a development from the authority of the King to the care of the Shepherd.

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* Standing in: A specific holding technique to ensure child safety.

** Julian Sleigh, *Thirteen to Nineteen: Discovering the Light*, Floris, 1989.

Fifteen

A cycle has been completed and a new one begins. The 'growing in and growing down' of the previous two seven-year phases has now been completed. A true growing 'up' and 'out' into the world now begins. A theme that will run throughout the next four years will be a growing interest in the world. This may be expressed, for example, in fashion, dance, drama and music, hobbies, environmental issues, political systems and rights, youth organisations, and most of all peer groups and friends in general. It is a time of dualism: on one hand we see great activity and enthusiasm in groups; and on the other, inwardness and a need for solitude, compassion for the plight of the disadvantaged people of the world. It can be a time, also, of very personally hurtful attacks and extremely self-centred behaviour; exaggerated self-belief alongside acute self-doubt and criticism; aggression yet vulnerability; retreat into the security of home and school punctuated by 'break-outs' such as truanting and not coming home; demands to be treated as an adult – yet excuses for immature behaviour, such as: 'What can you expect, I'm just a kid?' Whilst this pendulum movement between two poles can be exasperating for the adult, it is an essential way for the teenager to find the middle ground.

Another important feature of this time is the intensification of subjectivity, expressed in extreme views. This is a refined form of dualism: the fifteen-year old will approach the world in terms of black and white, wrong and right. Once, when negotiating with a fifteen year-old a coming-home time from a party, and being faced with an elaborate explanation for all the reasons why a later time was O.K., I threw up my hands and said: 'For goodness sake, do you have to be so subjective?' The memorable response was: 'What do you expect? That's my job.'

The unborn baby calling on its will to struggle through the birth canal into the world outside the womb, is echoed in the life of the fifteen year-old. What is being born in the teenager is consciousness. In particular, consciousness of her actions and their implications, her feelings with all their complexity and mobility, and her thoughts now better able to look incisively and clearly at the world. Each of these three qualities must be harmonised with one another if a morally guided, balanced life is to be led. In the education of the adolescent the cultivation of action, feeling and thought – in this order – is vital. It should be remembered that these qualities are, in their own subtle way, just as vulnerable as the physical body of the baby. They are both new-born.

We begin this cultivation by focusing on the development of the will. This forms the foundation around which other qualities may grow. A normal fifteen year-old displays abundant will. Anyone who has spent much time with young people at this age will have little doubt about this. Inner development at this age will also have its expression in space, in the way a young person moves. She may still display a residue of heaviness but a new quality of will has been added. She carries the weight, the gravity, but now seeks to shift it in a self-guided way.

Given that a dualism run through the life of the teenager, it also follows that there are 'spatial polarities' as well. In the the fifteen year-old this expresses itself in the polarity between the space that stands before or in front of us, and the space that is behind us. The front space: representing the future, 'stepping forward' – and the back space: the past, 'taking a step back'. This has a strong link with the fifteen year-old emerging from the previous phase of life, standing on the threshold looking toward the future and all that awaits her there. The 'frontal' plane of space calls upon the will of the fifteen year-old embarking on the journey into adulthood.

In sport this can be fostered not so much by changing the activities of the previous year, but by changing the emphasis, the way they are presented. While this may seem subtle, such a shift is absorbed by the teenager on a very deep level, and builds naturally to the development not only of good all-round skills and spatial understanding, but to a well-rounded, balanced individual. For example in **basketball,** the players are asked to focus on one-to-one skills in both defence and taking the offensive – taking on an opponent and trying to get by her successfully, while the defender responds quickly by adjusting position. The same principles can be applied in **rugby** and **hockey**. **Handball** can be introduced, as these qualities are easy to develop in this game. **Archery** is also a good sport to be introduced at this age. The action of standing one's ground, pulling the bow-string backward in order to release the arrow's forward movement, is a perfect metaphor for the fifteen year-old.

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In athletics, **hurdling** and **high-** and **long-jumping** develop the qualities that are sought. The athlete has to bring her will into the foreground by sprinting, approaching the obstacle, using her weight to press down into the earth and then up and over. In long-jump the principle is the same, but you strive to propel yourself as far forward as possible. The length of the jump, of course, is totally dependent on the amount of energy you are *will*-ing to exert. **Shot-put** is another activity that can be taught. As with long-jump, the athlete has to press down into gravity and explode with will to propel the shot forward. However, like archery, she stays where she is and the object is hurled forward. She must not get too caught up in the throw – otherwise she will fall beyond the ring and the throw cannot be counted. So the will must be called upon, but must not overcome the athlete: she must harness and master this power. Simple **tug-a-war** is also enjoyed at this age particularly. This involves a long length of thick strong rope, two teams holding the rope and attempting to pull the other over a designated line.

Although **swimming** will have gone on for many years, it has particular importance at this age. Unlike walking or even running, it takes the young person out of her every-day movement-environment. The swimmer's only means of moving, and indeed – in some cases – of not sinking, is to call on her will and motivate herself to swim through the water. Whilst in running or land-based activities you may choose to stop if you lose your motivation, in swimming this cannot be done. The swimmer must go on until she has reached the end. Then she may rest. This sounds rather obvious, but in a world of instant gratification, where you may have something now and pay for it later, swimming is rather a good antidote.

In gymnastics, **vaulting** manifests much of what is needed. Again we see a barrier being placed in the gymnast's path, one that requires her will-power combined with skill to overcome. This activity can be slowly built up over the months to a stage where quite difficult and challenging vaults are attempted. There is little need to stay within the narrow boundaries that competitive vaulting sets, in which only a box and springboard are used. Mini, double, and full trampolines can be adapted. Both uneven and parallel bars can be vaulted, and the setting gradually raised. The distance between the obstacle and the springboard/mini-trampoline can be widened so that the flight needed to make contact with the box is longer and more challenging. The boys can attempt simple moves on the **parallel bars, rings,** and **pommel** (or vaulting horse). This should involve strength and determination to push oneself to the limit of one's endurance before relaxing and recuperating for the next attempt. For the girls, simple moves on the **uneven bars** and **balance-beam** should give emphasis to courage and strength. Basic moves such as forward and backward rolls, or even hand- and headstands, can now be attempted on the balance beam; on the uneven bars, release and catch moves and dismounts can be tried, involving bravery and skill. On the floor, both the boys and girls can continue **handsprings**; but a new challenge can be introduced in the form of a **flick-flack** (sometimes known as a back-flip). This has been prepared for by the previous year's somersaults. This can be further developed with thrown-back somersaults, in which a gymnast runs towards another stationary gymnast or thrower, places her foot in the cupped hands of the thrower and her hands on his shoulders. She is then thrown up into the air, back in the direction she came from; and whilst in the air she executes a back somersault, landing on her feet facing the thrower. Of course careful attention needs to be paid to the technique: as with all these movements, this should only be attempted with the aid of an experienced leader.

There are many steps in preparing for a flick-flack, involving take-off from inclined springboards and/or raised platforms such as vaulting boxes, when the hands make contact with the end of the box and the dismount to the floor is to a lower level. One must stress the fact that the gymnast's arms need to be straight, the back-bend being full and dynamic, the head and eyes looking back towards the heels; and most of all, the explosion of energy off the floor.

Rock climbing and **abseiling** are also wonderful activities to be focused on now. Real quality-time needs to be devoted to this activity, that so meets the needs of the fifteen year-old. Here we see the dynamic frontal planes of the climber encounter the static frontal plane of the rock wall. Courage and will-power need to combine with endurance and a cool head. Once at the top, the climber has earned the pleasure of abseiling back down the face. In order to do this she must stand at the edge of the rock, facing away from the fall, pluck up her courage and launch herself backwards, over the edge, into space. Here again we see the dynamic interplay between front and back space, gravity and will. **Canoeing** and **kayaking** can also begin. Here the will is strongly involved: the paddler is required to exert a thrusting downward force into the water in order to propel herself forward. If this motion ceases her movement simply stops. **Hiking** and **cross country skiing** also fit perfectly with this stage. **Snorkelling** and especially **scuba diving** are very popular and beneficial activities. These help the student to explore weight and its effects, as well as engaging their will to influence it.

Sixteen

The foundations have now been laid, the life of the will continues to play its part in offering solidity and motivation; but now a new dimension emerges, the life of feelings. The sixteen year-old is no longer a child. Instead one now encounters a true 'young adult'. Some of the defensiveness of the past begins to change. She is likely to be more ready to accept the consequences of her own behaviour. The individual begins to emerge and the role of the peer group shows the first signs of becoming less important. In its place can come a more intense one-to-one relationship with another, quite often of the opposite sex. The young adult seeks to define her place more in terms of her individual relationships with her friends and also, perhaps, her boyfriend. How she feels about people and issues, and certainly how others feel about her, become somewhat central in her life. Whereas her relationships were previously governed by reasonably cohesive peer group and family structures, she will now attempt to redefine these in a much more individualised way. She will look around herself with an appraising eye – like a captain on board a ship surveying the horizon – ensuring she is on the right course, enjoying the sunshine but checking for potential storms and hazards.

In spatial development at this age we can see a strong relationship to the ***horizon*** *and the* ***horizontal*** *plane. What lies above and below the horizontal plane becomes more sharply defined. Whilst the will activity of the previous year was mainly experienced through the limbs, the horizontal plane is more closely related to the trunk – the place in the body that has the strongest relationship to its own rhythmical movements. We can see this in the movement of the heart and lung, and even in the peristalsis of the intestines. Here also is the focal point of the feeling life.*

In **sport** many activities of the previous year can be continued, but again a shift of spatial emphasis is required. Rugby, wrestling, hockey and football may become less valuable. Now the accent moves more strongly to the player's relationship with her fellow team-mates or her position on the court. She will have a greater capacity to understand that she need not chase the ball, but can move into the right position and make herself available for a pass; or even distract other opponents, thus giving the ball-carrier more space to move. She may sacrifice her own 'glory' for that of the team. This needs to be encouraged and praised. Sports which may have been previously introduced, such as **tennis, badminton, softball, baseball,** can now be focused on more strongly; for in the batting and stroking of the ball and shuttle, the horizontal plane comes to the fore in a wonderful way. **Ice-skating** is another activity that lends itself splendidly to the dynamics required at this time. **Volleyball** can be further developed with particular emphasis on passing, both in digging and volleying. Ball games such as **netball, korfball** and in particular b**asketball,** are very appropriate at this age; they emphasise the patient build-up of passing, and the total awareness of all players on court. Tight refereeing is important, to allow the player to be more proactive and not encroach on the opponent's space, thus committing a foul. Creating screens for your team-mate to shoot over; 'picks' (see glossary) for her to run off; give and go moves; creating a momentary distraction or moving clear of an area, to create space for your team-mate; or alternatively being aware of when space is being created for you: these are all skills that transform basketball from what can at times be an aggressive to a flowing, total-awareness, spatially sensitive game.

In **athletics** the **discus** should receive pride of place, with its clear experience of the horizontal plane. An interesting adjunct to the programme can be **learning first-aid.** In this area the young person can both develop valuable skills and be given a safe context in which to express her feeling for the well-being of another person.

In **gymnastics** an artistic approach is needed. Much will have been learned over the past years; now the separate moves are arranged together to form routines and choreographies. At first these may be simple and the instructor will prompt often. But in time the sixteen year-olds will enjoy working out their own routines in an attempt to express themselves in an aesthetically attractive and spatially dynamic way. The routines may take the form of gymnastic display work, in which a team of gymnasts will perform a series of split-second manoeuvres arranged in an artistic and energetic way. These can often be performed for parents and peers at assemblies and festivals, or simply be done for their own sake.

Water sports form the core of the outdoor education programme at this time, particularly **sailing** and **windsurfing.** Here one literally has a clear horizon and a need to be extremely sensitive to the environment and the changes in both the currents and the wind. If you are lucky enough to have access to surf beaches, then this also has a fine role to play around this age. Basic **downhill skiing** can also be developed. In such an activity there is a need to be very aware of one's surroundings, making quick adjustments when needed.

Seventeen

At seventeen begins a phase of looking forward. Decisions are made around this age that will have implications for many years to come. Many possibilities will present themselves; the essential and the non-essential will need to be carefully sorted out and a direction found. While parents and teachers may be called on for advice, the process is largely in the hands of the young person herself. This process may well go on for several years. If we cast our minds back only two years – to the stage of the fifteen year-old – we can see evidence of the rapid changes that occur during adolescence. A basis was laid around fifteen, then followed a phase in which the feelings of the individual became more conscious; but what now begins to emerge are incisive, clear qualities of thought. This will be of great assistance as the seventeen year-old begins to assess where she is now and where she wants to go. She will be reasonably realistic about her skills and limitations. The harsh subjective criticisms of the past begin to give way to a new objectivity. The 'no' phase is largely over, the 'maybe' phase, though still present, begins to give way to a 'yes' phase. However the 'yes' will only be affirmed if it stands up to the teenager's own intense, analytical, penetrating focus of thought.

The seat of this thinking is our head, which is the part of the body least involved in movement. A possible analogy for the three-fold relationship between head, heart and limbs, is the following: the limbs are like horses, full of power and responsive to any command, that make it possible for the carriage to move; the carriage represents the trunk, able to respond to the bumps along the way, mediating between the road, the horses and the passenger; the passenger is like a king or queen, carried by the carriage, able to sit quietly with a certain interested detachment, sure of its role and control of the situation.

In terms of spatial development, the dissection of left and right, and the symmetry that exists between the two in the vertical plane, is similar to the process the seventeen year-old goes through when determining the essential from the non essential and finding a path forward. It is necessary to become conscious; by balancing what is to the left and to the right, we find the plane that exists between two extremes. We come into harmony and symmetry and can truly relate to what is vertical, what is upright.

As in previous years, this new psychological and spatial development needs to find its place in the movement experience. We are attempting to give expression to the qualities of verticality and conscious thought.

Many of the sports of the previous year can be continued, further developing the will/frontal, and the feeling/horizontal planes; but now emphasis shifts to the thinking/vertical. In games such as **basketball,** for example, the focus moves to shooting; in **racket sports,** to accuracy – particularly in the overhead smash and serve; in athletics to **sprinting** and **javelin,** which provide a clear experience of symmetry and total focus on the finishing line; in **softball** and **baseball** absolute accuracy in throwing in the field and in pitching. There are some other activities which are perfect at this age: in **cricket** we see one of the most gracious and clear examples of symmetry and verticality. This is most obvious in the predominantly straight or vertical bat-strokes that can be played with force or with wonderful finesse. Symmetry is beautifully expressed in the bowling action, and in the position of the wicket at the centre of the field of play – the ball may be stroked either to the left, right, forward or behind, over the fielders' heads or along the ground. In short it is one of the few games that encompasses all six spatial directions.

While **volleyball** will have been built up in the previous years, it is at this age that it comes into its own. Digging, volleying and setting,* demand symmetry: both hands or arms must make perfectly equal contact when playing the ball; if this happens then the pass will be accurate, but if it is only a fraction out there will either be a foul or the ball will fly out of control. In serving, and particularly in spiking,* there is a need for fine control yet power, and a strong relationship with verticality. This is especially obvious in the vertical jump that proceeds the spike.

Another major theme at this time is cultivating the ability to move with accuracy, precision and speed. This requires lightning reflexes, an ability to perceive an opening, and most of all, keeping a 'cool head'.

These moments can be found in many sports but they are most 'distilled' in **table tennis** and in particular **fencing.** If at all possible, these qualities should be strongly encouraged at this age.

Eighteen to twenty one

The time between eighteen and twenty-one is of great significance; this has been recognised throughout the ages, and is especially expressed in initiation rites following puberty. The young man or woman now stands at the doorway leading from adolescence into adulthood, looking back to the past and forward to the future. The strength of the threefold qualities of soul expressed in willing, feeling, and thinking that have been developed since puberty, are now brought together and play a vital role in how the young person makes this step. It is a time of testing, exploration and risk-taking, in an effort to find one's limits and potentials and then attempt to push out beyond them. This often takes a physical form but can also be an inner, spiritual quest. It is a time where ideals and hope flourish – which can sometimes end in great disappointment. The young person will look about herself and see the weaknesses and contradictions of the world, and how they need changing. If she has developed inner soul strength in the time since puberty, she may just see a way that she can make a difference. This is also a very special time in terms of spatial development. The three planes and the six directions of space have, we hope, been thoroughly experienced. What can follow is the conscious realising of these in every activity.

We can encourage such an exploration by looking back and briefly experiencing the many stages of spatial development that have been passed through. One may even look as far back as the baby's journey through postural stages in the striving towards uprightness. This begins at a 'plant'-stage (lying on the back), then passes through the following: 'bird' (lying on front with arms and feet outstretched so that only the pelvis touches the ground); fish (lying on the front, feet raised, with legs bent at the knee, arms bent with hands palm down near the shoulders); reptile (same as the fish, but push upwards so that the arms are straight); quadruped (classic crawling position); and finally the human being standing on two feet. Then one can progress through the singing, finger games and hand games, skipping, and all the other stages that have been comprehensively described in this book. It is often heartwarming to see these young adults now secure enough within themselves to be willing to go back and play the games of their childhood. Although this is often riotous fun, the aim of the teacher is to bring the young adult into a conscious understanding both of the stages of spatial development, and of why certain games – and later sports – were played at quite specific times. In other words, the teacher now draws back the veil on all that has gone before. This will often leave the eighteen year-olds with a new-found respect for the process they have passed through, and, even more importantly, the space in which they move now.

It is at this age that teenagers will often feel the need to become very proficient at just one or perhaps two sports. As far as possible this should be facilitated, both within school time and after school, in clubs. They should be encouraged to pass their newly developed expertise on to younger children who are just beginning their sporting journey. This can be done in after-school clubs or on class or group outings. By encouraging this, the adult is recognising the maturity of the young adult, is challenging her to further develop and deepen these skills by doing what also needs to be cultivated at this age – helping others.

In each sport, great emphasis should now be placed on being aware of the threefold planes of space and how they interact. For example in **athletics,** especially running, it can be pointed out that to run with both speed and grace the legs and arms must move powerfully; and yet the trunk must not overtense and in a subtle way try to do the job of the limbs; likewise the head must remain still and focused, not moving from side to side or contracting back into the trunk so that the shoulders become hunched. Each of these three aspects has its own job to do and needs to be given the freedom and awareness to do so. This example is true for every sport; indeed, it is actually true for every movement, even brushing teeth and washing dishes. At this time, then, in every sport and activity, the young adult should strive to stay conscious not only of what she achieves but how she moves to achieve it. This theme of pure, free movement is also taken into **gymnastics.** Every exercise, no matter how simple, should be executed with strength, grace, and clarity. This is also an ideal time to teach the gymnast standing-in or spotting techniques (see glossary), so that she can deepen her understanding of even very basic exercises.

In outdoor pursuits, as far as possible, a freedom of choice should be given. The kind of activities that are often popular are those that are the physically most thrilling and dangerous. More advanced **down-hill skiing,** and **rock climbing** are popular. **Hang gliding** and even **parachuting** have at times been pursued and very much enjoyed. At this age there is, again, a need to push the limits of what can be achieved.

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It is also beneficial for the seventeen year-old to acquire a very good **knowledge of the rules** of each game. Talks and projects may be set in this area. Short courses can be given, followed by a rotation of players taking it in turns to referee part of a game. This facilitates a further development of the ability to see beyond the surface and calls for real clarity of perception and reaction.

In **gymnastics,** the previous year's efforts in display work can be developed further; but now this can move into more individually-based routines. **Trampoline** work is of particular benefit, as many of the moves require a solid understanding of verticality. However these dynamics can of course be found and accentuated in all areas of gymnastics.

In **orienteering,** map-reading and compass-settings are further developed, with the courses becoming progressively more difficult. **Kayaking** and **down-hill skiing** require all the faculties previously mentioned in connection with fencing, but to a still greater degree. **Rowing** is of special importance as the boat's linear direction through space – in this case through the medium of water – is totally dependent on the individual or the team exerting equal pressure on the right and the left of the boat. This is an excellent example of the threefold qualities of the head, trunk and limbs. The legs press away and back, the arms strain at the oars, the trunk tenses and relaxes rhythmically with each stroke, and the head remains still and focused on the task.

In general the seventeen year-old should be encouraged not only to play the game but also to understand what lies behind it. She will, for example, benefit from being offered frequent opportunities to plan and execute tactics – such as increasingly complex motion offensives, or set-play isolation moves in basketball. The same goes for volleyball, with crossover shoot, and quick or short-set spiking attacks; in table-tennis, the role of top and backspin in setting-up for a smash; in orienteering, the careful planning of the route to optimise efficiency.

* see glossary

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP SPATIAL AWARENESS

AGE 16+

The activities that follow are a blending of games and spatial exercises. **They are aimed primarily at the teenager and the adult.** They will be of little benefit to the pre-puberty child, who will not yet have developed the faculties for understanding them.

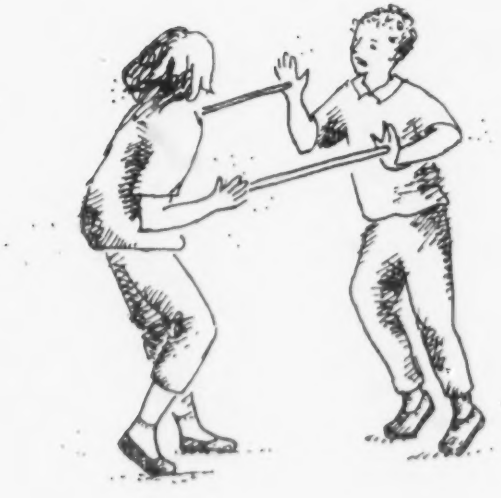
217. EQUILIBRIUM

Equipment: 1 wooden staff for each player

Each player has a partner. Facing a partner, the players hold their hands at chest height. The two staffs are held between the partners' hands with a firm pressure. Tell the pairs to increase the pressure, ensuring that it is very firm.

One partner is the leader, the other the follower. They move in silence. The follower tries to maintain the pressure of both staffs, mirroring the leader's actions. For instance, when the leader walks backwards, the follower must maintain the pressure on her hand made by the staff, as she moves forwards.

The second stage is for the follower to close her eyes while doing this. The leader must not move too quickly, and is responsible for preventing any collisions! She must guide her partner safely through the room full of other pairs.



Variation

The number of followers per leader can increase. Build the number up slowly, Start with two then three followers. Three followers and one leader is a good number as they will then form a square when they hold their staffs between each others' hands.

They will try to keep this shape as they are led. But with more than one follower, the leader also has the option of calling out **'Stop!'** Then the followers stand still, open their eyes and correct themselves. (For instance, two of them may be about to collide with each other.)

Whatever happens, the equilibrium must be kept at all times.

It is possible for 20 people to play this in a circle. If I am the leader in such a group, I ask the players to keep their eyes closed. I then stand as still as I possibly can, not varying the pressure on the staffs either side of me in any way. Almost invariably, the same interesting and very funny thing always occurs: although I haven't moved, the circle moves, perhaps because that is what everyone is expecting.

Since the leader must not respond in any way, but only initiate movement, a staff will eventually fall to the ground and the communication between staffs breaks down. I then suggest that the group try again, trying to listen more carefully to one another.

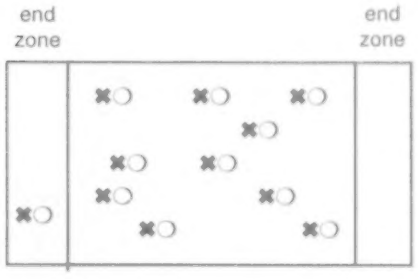
This is an exercise that asks the participants for acute spatial sensitivity, as well as for clear communication between them. I have played this game with such diverse groups as drug-addicted teenagers, drama students and in-service trainees in firms and corporations. It never fails to be a revealing experience for the participants – both in terms of how they affect others and how they respond to events.

218. ULTIMATE

This is a variation on the well-known game of the same name developed in the United States.

Equipment: bibs or vests to mark the two teams. one frisbee or an aerobie.

Play area: a large empty space: e.g. a hockey pitch. Mark off the two 'end zones'



Divide the players into two teams of about 11-15 players each. Each team starts off with three 'downs' or lives. During one of their 'downs' they have uninterrupted possession of the frisbee.

To score a point, a player must throw the frisbee to another player on her team who is in the end zone. Any player is allowed in an end zone for only 5 seconds at a time.

No player may run with the frisbee in her possession. She may pivot. Any player may only hold the frisbee for 5 seconds. Any longer than this and it is counted as a 'down' (or a lost life). No defending player is allowed within two arm-lengths of the player with the frisbee. If this occurs and the defending player does not retreat, then the attacking player may call for a 5-yard penalty; she may then advance 5 yards towards her end zone and the offending player must then stand 1 yard behind her until she has taken her free throw.

When a point is scored, for instance by Team A, then Team A gets possession of the frisbee and starts by throwing it as far as they can away from their own end zone (where they just scored). Team B will be waiting where they calculate the frisbee will land, to begin a new attack.

If a catcher doesn't catch the frisbee, she declares it a 'down' by raising her arm. She then waits while the two teams form a line. This is done by the team in possession of the frisbee forming a line across the field, facing their end zone, at about the place where the frisbee was dropped. The frisbee is placed on the ground where it was dropped. A player who will initiate the next play stands near it.

The opposition team then make a line facing the other team, about 5 paces away. No-one can break out of these lines until one of the players with possession of the frisbee picks it up off the ground and attempts to make a pass.

If a throw is intercepted by a clean catch, by Player B, for instance, then Team B is awarded possession of the frisbee (a 'turnover'). If a turnover occurs, then all downs no longer count, and the team in possession of the frisbee is allowed three downs.

However, if the interceptor drops the frisbee in her attempt, possession is given to the team that was attempting the pass.

After three drops or 'downs' the frisbee is given to the other team from the place where the last down took place. However if Team A, for instance, throws the frisbee beyond the field of play, then Team B is awarded possession from the place where the frisbee crossed the line.

Variations

* You can agree not to play the line-out rule. Players may take up any position on the field and not have to run back and form two lines after each down. This makes the game more flowing and usually necessitates man on man marking (one player exclusively guards only one player from the opposition team).

* If a player has the frisbee, she can decide to run with it: but then she can be chased and touched by a player from the opposite team. This touch must be made with both hands simultaneously. This would then count as a down.

Ultimate is based loosely on American and Australian football, but instead of bone-crunching tackles, there is laughter, long flying throws and running free of worries about physical contact.

In the official *Ultimate* game there is no referee. Players must follow a sporting code and own up to any fouls or drops that may have occurred. If there is a dispute then the players involved have to negotiate and sort it out before play can continue.

219. HELP!

Equipment:
beanbags (enough for 60% of the group)

One person is chosen to be ***It*** and chases the others, trying to tip them. The other players are safe from ***It*** when they are holding a beanbag.

If someone is in danger of being caught, she can shout **'Help!'** to the others – and, hopefully, a beanbag will be thrown to her before she is tipped. When caught by ***It***, the player leaves the game.

Begin by throwing the beanbags into the air, so that all players have a chance to catch one. As the game progresses, slowly collect the beanbags, so that there are always too few to go around. About 60% of the players will at any one time have one in their hand.

This game tries to encourage players to become a little more aware of one another's needs or plight. In one school I taught in, I had continually observed that when the bell rang and everyone had to pass through the front doors of the building, none of the teenagers ever held the door for the others behind them – even if they had just been knocked in the face themselves by it! This was an example of how self-absorbed young people are at this age – each one the only sun in the universe. *Help!* is a game that tries to help people move beyond an 'each one for herself' attitude.

I have also played this game successfully with adults on various training courses, as well as in work settings and in-service training days.

It is interesting to observe who is prepared to sacrifice the safety of having her own beanbag, for the sake of another student who is in trouble. I have observed that some people (especially the girls) sacrifice too soon for others, don't value themselves enough and are always caught out. There are also those who tend to selfishly hold on to their own beanbag – but they lose out on the thrill of a narrow escape. The experience of being chased without a beanbag and not getting help, is a bit like a bad dream – everyone could save you but no-one will!

At other times you are being chased and will have bean bags thrown to you, but because you are panicking you do not have the presence of mind to catch them.

At this age, I feel it is appropriate to discuss the social dynamic of such a game – it fits the adolescent's growing interest in self-awareness and self-development.

220. PEG TAG

Equipment: clothes pegs (one per player)

The object of this game is to collect as many pegs as you can. Each player puts a peg on the back of her shirt. At an agreed signal the game begins. All the players are free to move about, trying to steal the peg from another person's back, without having their own taken.

When you are successful in stealing a peg you put it on the back of your own shirt. While putting on a peg, a player cannot be 'attacked'. You may not protect your peg/s using your hands.

Give the group 3 minutes to take as many pegs as possible off the others' shirts, and to put them on their own shirts.

Around puberty, one's space contracts. This can be seen in the posture: girls tend to arch their backs, assuming a more convex posture, whereas boys lean forward, bring their shoulders to the fore – their posture becomes more concave. Games at this age should help the individual awaken to a broader awareness of the space and world around her. It is particularly valuable to work on developing children's awareness of the space behind them – 'back space'.

This game helps players develop a sense of back space and a general spatial awareness. It is also an image of how to develop individuality in a healthy way: taking from the world (taking others' pegs) but at the same time guarding what one has already achieved (protecting one's own pegs).

221. STICK THROUGH WATER

Divide the group into pairs. The pairs stand holding hands, one pair behind another, in the centre of the room, but facing towards the far wall. These pairs are the 'clear water' through which the 'stick', a single player, will move.

The stick stands on the opposite side of the room, facing the clear water. The stick moves towards the line of players forming the water. The water also moves at walking pace towards the stick. The stick goes through the centre of the partners who release their hands in the same direction the stick is walking, just at the moment the stick is in front of them, spinning off as they do so.

The player who was the stick waits quietly while the turbulence of the others dies down. Another player can now be the stick.

The pairs reform, now at the other side of the room (where the previous stick began), and the second stick approaches them. Continue until each player has had a turn to move through the others.
When teaching such an exercise for the first time, ask the players to follow your movements like an echo – so they learn through doing, and not always through verbal descriptions.

Once a 'child' is 16-18 or older, the games generally appropriate for her are games that are suitable for adults as well. With 16-18 year olds, you can spend time reviewing the games curriculum – playing games from previous years, and explaining to the participants why such games are important. This is because they are now secure enough in themselves not to be embarrassed about stepping out of their 'age' and entering into a game for younger children. Although they play such games now with a different consciousness, they also have a lot of fun. As well as entering into such a game with warmth of heart, they can also use their emerging thinking to understand the psychology behind it. They begin to reflect on their own behaviour and ways of being in the context of the game. How did I relate to the others on my team? Why was I always caught when I was the mouse? By discussing such questions, the adolescent can come to insights about her own character; and by bringing this to consciousness, take a first step towards changing.

Developed by Jaimen McMillan

222. CANDLES

The next game is one I developed on the spur of the moment, although since then I have seen it played in other parts of the world too! When I think of this game, the comic picture of bulky and (often) clumsy teenage boys daintily trying to save their flames from being extinguished, comes to my mind!

Equipment: Lit candles in simple candle-holders so that each player has one.

Each player has to try to blow out the others' candles, without letting hers be blown out. Also, players must be careful not to extinguish their own flames through sudden movements or by tipping the candles too far over.

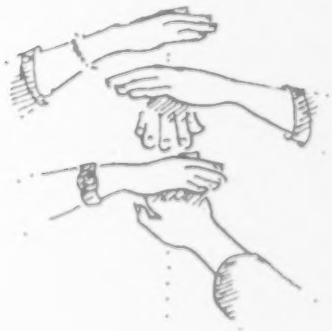
Variations

* One person is designated to be the one from whom the other players can relight their candles.
* Or, players can relight their candles from any lit flame.
* Give each player two candles, one for each hand.

223. HAND TOWER

The players make a tower of hands: they hold one of their hands about 2 or 3 inches (5-8cm) above the hand below theirs, palm over palm and trying not to touch anyone else's hands.

It is helpful to imagine the following: if a thin golden beam of light that could penetrate matter, was shone through the palm of the player's hand at either the top or bottom of the tower, it would pass directly through the centre of the palm of every other player.



Everyone should put one hand in the tower – which will probably mean that the players will have to huddle closely together, turning sideways on. They should all put the same hand in. Arms should be fully extended and roughly horizontal.

The player whose hand is at the top of the tower, lifts her hand up and away; the other hands move up and out of the tower, following or being 'drawn' by the hand above. This movement continues until each outstretched arm and hand is raised vertically above the head. This is done quite slowly and consciously.

At the moment the last person raises her hand and arm to the vertical position, the first person begins to lower her arm and hand again, back down to its original position.

Then the tower can reform into its horizontal position. When this is achieved and the whole group have brought their hands back down into the tower, continue the movement of the arms and hands down until they are resting at your side.

A powerful image that can accompany this activity is to picture your hand above hot coals when it is by your side. In raising your arm and hands to the horizontal and forming the tower, you share this heat. As your hand is lifted higher you begin to experience a greater coolness.

This activity allows life-forces to stream into the hands, warming them. Often the players realise this with surprise and wonder. It also helps them differentiate between the qualities of space above and below us.

Developed by Jaimen McMillan

224. NIGHT WATCHMAN

Equipment:
Two blindfolds, one set of keys on a key ring, a bag with a few tools in it.
A 2-foot (60cm) length of cylindrical foam pipe-insulation. If this can't be found a thinly rolled-up piece of newspaper about the same length will do.

The players form a circle about 10-12 paces across. One player is chosen as the Night Watchman. She is taken into the centre of the circle, blindfolded and given the foam 'stick' and the bunch of keys. A Burglar is chosen. She is placed inside the circle near the edge of it. She is blindfolded and given the bag with tools in it.

The aim of the game is for the Night Watchman to find the Burglar and hit her gently with his stick. The Burglar tries to avoid being caught. Both players are free to move about the circle. If the two blindfolded players are about to leave the circle, one of the players standing nearby will gently and silently guide her back in.

If the game leader senses the Burglar has no idea where the Night Watchman is, she calls out **'Night watchman'**. The Night Watchman must then rattle her keys. The Burglar now knows where her pursuer is and quietly tries to move away from her. The Night Watchman listens for any noise in order to locate the Burglar.

If the game leader senses the Night Watchman has no idea where the Burglar is, she calls out **'Burglar'**, who must then shake her bag of tools, giving the Night Watchman a clue to where she is.

The game ends when either the Burglar has escaped for enough time, say two minutes, without being caught or the Night Watchman succeeds in hitting her gently with her stick.

225. ELF AND GOBLIN BOOTS

Equipment: Two blindfolds
Four elastic garters or bands with a small bell sewn or threaded on top of each of them. They should be big enough to slip over, or tie around the ankle.
Follow the same guidelines as in *Night Watchman.*

The aim of the game is for the Elf to avoid being touched by the Goblin. However in this game there is no need for the leader to call out, because every time either the Elf or the Goblin moves, the bells around her ankles will make a noise.

226. FOLLOW THE HUMMING BIRD

Each person should have a partner. One partner closes her eyes. She is the follower. The other partner is the humming bird. He has his eyes open. He stands about three feet (one metre) behind the follower, facing her. He begins to hum in a constant pitch. He slowly begins to walk backwards, humming. It is the follower's task to respond to the moving humming bird by following where she thinks the humming bird is moving to.

The follower and the humming bird both walk slowly backwards. After about 30 seconds the humming bird will stop. The follower must try to respond to this by also stopping and not bumping into the humming bird.

If there is a group playing this, each pair must wait quietly when finished, so as to let the others also finish without being distracted.

227. THE HUMMING BIRD AND THE EGG

Equipment: One beanbag between two players

One player holds the beanbag – the 'egg' – in her hand, which is the 'nest'. She closes her eyes. The other player is the humming bird. She circles around the nest at a distance of about 6-10 feet (1.8 - 3 metres), humming in a constant pitch. She has her eyes open. The person holding the egg listens closely to her humming and tries to follow where she is.

After about 30 seconds the humming bird stops humming and stands very still. The person holding the egg, with her eyes still closed, must now throw it to where she thinks the humming bird is standing.

Without moving her feet the humming bird tries to catch the egg. The person who threw the egg may now open her eyes and see how accurate she has been.

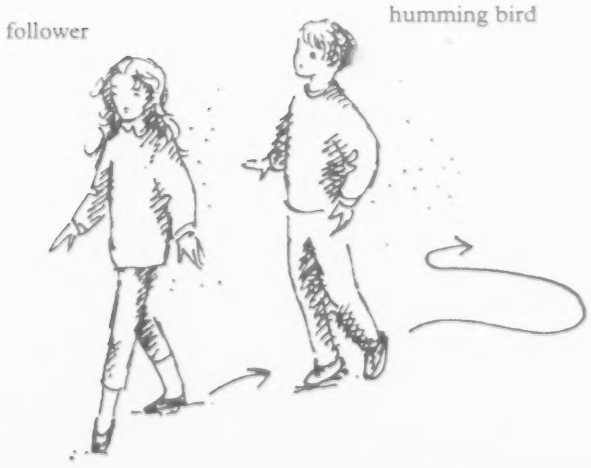
When playing this with a large group, the leader will have to signal to all the humming birds to stop at the same time.

228. SWAP THE HUMMING BIRD

Follow the directions given for *Follow the humming bird.* But this time, when the humming birds are moving about the room, they catch the eye of another humming bird and at a given signal leave their follower and swap over with the humming bird they signalled to. Both humming birds now have a new follower.

The followers must quickly reorientate and set off in pursuit of the new humming bird.

This manoeuvre may be repeated several times in the 2-3 minutes the game lasts. At the end of the game the players gather in a circle and the followers try to guess who, at various stages, were their humming birds.



229. WITCHES AT THE DOOR

Equipment: One blindfold per player is ideal but eyes closed can suffice.

This is another blindfolded game that requires a keen sense of the space around one.

At the end of one playing area a 'witches' door' is designated of about 6-8 paces across. All players are blindfolded. Two witches are chosen to guard this door and attempt to catch anyone trying to cross the line (the door) by tipping them. The witches are not permitted to leave the doorway.

The other players stand about 15 paces away. It is their aim to cross the doorway without being tipped by the witches. If they do this they are safe. If they are tipped they are out. The game ends when either all the players have crossed over the doorway, or have been tipped by the witches, or a combination of both.

As related by Paul Harnischfeger

230. DRAGONS AND ANGELS

This game has many differing roles that can be taken up by children aged 7-18. It is a game that requires courage; the only way of protecting oneself against the evil dragon is to join forces with others, and stand firm in the face of danger – for this reason this game is particularly suited to Michaelmas, in autumn.

A large number of children can play, but it is important to play in a wild area – it heightens the adventure and sense of danger! This game can be quite frightening for younger children, but they can take refuge in designated safe places. For the older children who are the dragons, it is important that they agree to play in the spirit of the game: they shouldn't scare the little ones too much, but can let rip a bit more with older children. I have played this game for a whole morning – but it is hard to keep track of so many children over such a large area, so it is good to have a few more adults to assist you.

Equipment:
Enough gongs (or musical instruments, e.g. French horn, triangle, flute) for each angel.
Costumes and make-up for the dragons (you could dress them in black, with red or fierce-looking make-up), and for the angels (white, crowns – looking angelic!)

Play area:
This game works best played in a large area which is quite wild, with trees and bushes. One area – a rock, little hill, a clearing – should be designated as the 'fairy' place. Another area is the dragons' lair.

Divide the children into 3 groups: A quarter of the children dress up as dragons, usually the 13 or 14 year olds. Another quarter of the children dress up as angels and are given a gong each (usually the 15-16 year olds). The rest of the players are the children playing in the forest.

The dragons try to catch the children. If they catch one, the child goes to the dragon's lair, where she can be freed by a passing angel who takes her by the hand and leads her back to the fairy place. The children's only protection against a dragon is to form a circle near an angel, and sing or hum in harmony to the note of the gong which she is striking.

To capture a dragon, she must be encircled by a ring of singing children. When a dragon is captured, she is taken to the fairy rock, and takes off the dragon's make-up and costume, becoming an angel.

The angels move through the woods, and when they see a dragon they hit their gong, so that the children are warned. The children listen out for the noise of the gong. When they hear it they can choose to run away from the dragon, or run towards the angel and make a circle (with more than two children) and begin singing. The dragon is powerless against the singing.

The game ends when either all the dragons have been caught or, after a suitable length of time, a note is sounded from a whistle or flute. All the children are then safe to gather in the fairy place and see how many dragons have been captured.

Variations

* The dragons carry black ribbons. When a child has been caught by a dragon, she must wear a black ribbon until she has freed himself from this evil by singing in a circle.

* The dragons can wear bells around their ankles, or carry tambourines.

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Glossary of Terms

Bounce dig: Where the ball may bounce once and the player then 'digs' the ball up in the air.

Brand: To 'tip' another person, using a ball.

Canyon lines: When players may reach over the line and take the ball, provided their feet are not touching the line.

Catch-dig: A little throw to yourself, then 'dig'.

Catch-set: A little throw to yourself above the head, then 'set'.

Coupe: Cut (French).

Dig: In volleyball – place one hand over the other, arms straight, and horizontal to the ground. The ball is then hit up into the air using the wrist area.

Down: A lost life.; designated number of chances.

Home guarding: When a player (or players) continually guard a certain area, without ever moving from it.

Hot-potato: No player can hold the ball for more than 3 seconds at a time.

On the full: To catch a ball without it bouncing or being intercepted in any way

Pick: This is when one teammate stands stationary while another, the dribbler, deliberately runs her opponent up against this player, thus freeing herself from the opponent.

Pike: Bend at the waist, while leg and arm are straight.

Set: (see Volley).

Spike: In volleyball – like an overhead smash in tennis: jumping up above net height and hitting the ball with a single open hand downwards.

Standing in, spotting: These terms are used for specific holding techniques which the guide or teacher uses to ensure child safety.

Tag: This word can suggest too violent a slap, so I prefer using 'tip'.

Tip: To purposefully touch another person in a chase.

Turnover: The other team is given, or wins, possession of the playing medium (i.e. ball, frisbee).

Volley: In volleyball – a player strikes the ball cleanly with two outstretched palms when the ball is above shoulder height.

Wall lines: This is rarer than 'canyon-lines'. No part of the body, especially hands, may extend through an imaginary wall built up from the line.

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